00046519

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

00046519

OBERON,

A POEM.

FROM THE GERMAN OF WIELAND.

By WILLIAM SOTHEBY, Esq.

a 58

IN TWO VOLUMES.

THE SECOND EDITION.

46519
ae

VOL. II.

LRC 14

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. BULMER AND CO.
CLEVELAND-ROW, ST. JAMES'S;
FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND.

1805.

831.6
Sot/obc
46519

OBERON.

CANTO VII.

I.

STEER'D by the guardian fairy's viewless hand,
That smooth'd the sea, and curb'd each stormy blast,
The lovely pair sev'n days of pleasure past,
In safety reach'd Lepanto's promis'd land;
Before their sight, within the shelter'd bay,
Two well-built pinnaces at anchor lay,
Their streamers float before the fav'ring gales;
This freighted for the port of rich Marseilles,
That to the neighb'ring coast of Naples steers her way.

II.

Tir'd of his wary follower's Argus eyes,
Worn by his vigilance and Mentor mien,
The youthful lover gladdens at a scene
Where fav'ring chance his eager wish supplies:
He grasps the proffer'd boon without delay—
" My friend! whole days and years may slip away,
" Ere Huon sees again his native home:
" First, I am bound, you know, to visit Rome,
" And must, above all claims, that holy call obey!

III.

" Yet duty bids me to the king declare
" All is fulfill'd, the word I rashly swore.
" Thou art my liegeman, go my path before—
" Do thou, if Huon fail, to France repair.
" Away! To proud Marseilles yon pinnace steers,
" Thence haste to court, and, mid th' assembled peers,
" To sooth the emperour, for thy master's sake,
" This casket with the beard and grinders take,
" And with strange tale amaze the monarch's wond'ring ears.

IV.

" And say, that when the pope with holy pray'r
" Has blest our union, Huon at his feet
" Shall with the caliph's child his presence greet.
" Farewell, old friend!—the wind blows fresh and fair;
" And, hark! that joyful shout!—th' impatient crew
" Now heave the anchor: honest friend! adieu!—
" Success attend thee—haste!—the mandate o'er,
" Seek me at Rome—we there shall meet once more:
" Fresh blows th' inviting gale—farewell! my liegeman true!"

V.

The old man darts his soul in Huon's eyes,
Shakes his gray beard, and though his bowels yearn,
And in his breast indignant anger burn,
Yet wisely curbs his tongue from sharp replies.
The casket well might wait; he thinks, indeed,
That present claim'd not such provoking speed:
The jewels would Sir Huon's entry grace,
When in the emperour's presence, face to face,
The knight had paid the debt, and stood by honour freed.

VI.

Forc'd by his friend and master's stern command,
Struck to the soul by his relentless air,
What can his liegeman but for flight prepare?
With farewell kiss he prints fair Rezia's hand:
But when he clasps his lord, and sees the knight
With loathing look his honest zeal requite,
Tears down his silver beard in streams descend—
"Master! best master! Heaven your days defend!
"Soon may we meet in peace! God keep you in his sight!"

VII.

How beat Sir Huon's heart, while wave on wave
Rolls on between him and his aged friend!
Oh! where at last will rash impatience end?
Ah! who like Sherasmin, so prompt to save
His master's life at hazard of his own?
How faithful by my side in danger shown!—
This sad reflection, now too late assails—
Oh! who shall counsel when my virtue fails?
Who snatch me from myself, abandon'd and alone?

VIII.

Thus inly he exclaims and firmly vows
True to himself and to his fairy friend,
(Who seems, though hid from view, at times, to send
A soft celestial breath that round him blows)
To stand the test of honour and of love.
No more he dares near fair Amanda move;
Far, far from her he stands the livelong night,
And to the pole-star lifts his aching sight,
And lets his listless looks, by day, o'er ocean rove.

IX.

Rezia, who sees, thus chang'd by dread alarms,
Huon, in whom she lives, more deeply grieves,
The less her anxious search the cause conceives:
With tender wo she weeps her powerless charms,
Not proudly feels, at his neglect, offence.
Sweet maid! what balm allays thy pang intense?
Patience is thine, whose smile might fiends disarm!
Yet every hour new dangers more alarm,
And, day and night their peace is rack'd by sad suspense.

X.

One night, when sinking from the cloudless sky
Arcturus wheel'd his radiant orb away,
To cool in Thetis' lap his closing ray,
On board the wild confusion seem'd to die;
Scarce rock'd the billows, as in shadowy rows
The floating harvest waves when Zephyr blows;
Dead slumber dully steep'd in fumes of wine
Had bound the crew, and at the helm supine
The careless pilot sunk in undisturb'd repose.

XI.

Sad Huon rackt by feelings long supprest,
While every bitter tear, that silent stole,
Wrung by his harshness from Amanda's soul,
Burns like a flame of fire his bleeding breast,
Breathes forth at last so loud so long a sigh,
His death-groan strikes her ear—he soon must die—
Shame and deep anguish rack the wav'ring maid—
If fails Amanda, who shall Huon aid,
Bend to his whisper'd wo, and close his drooping eye.

XII.

Amanda, like an angel rob'd in light,
Soft pity heightening her celestial charms,
Stands o'er the youth with fearful open arms.
He thinks that heaven expands before his sight—
His cheek, but now so wan with ceaseless woes,
Beams with new life, with fiery passion glows:
His blood, but now that faint and fainter crept,
Swift through each vein in quivering pulses leapt.
Forbear! frail youth, forbear!—relentless fates oppose.

XIII.

They meet—the heav'ns are darken'd, quench'd each star!
Ah! happy pair! they knew it not—the wave
Howls, as unfetter'd winds o'er ocean rave:
Their tempest-laden pinions roar from far!
They hear it not—with rage encircled round,
Stern Oberon flying through the gloom profound
Rushes before their face—they hear him not!
And thrice the thunder peals their boded lot:
Alas! they hear it not, each sense in rapture drown'd!

XIV.

Meanwhile the tumult maddens more and more;
Fierce from all sides at once a whirlwind breaks;
Rock'd by rude gusts the earth confus'dly shakes,
The welkin flames, with lightning vaulted o'er:
High in the air by surging tempests cast,
The world of waters bellows to the blast:
The vessel reels at random to and fro,
The boatswain calls in vain, while shrieks of wo
Ring through the staggering ship, all hope of safety past!

XV.

The wind's unbridled rage, the heav'n that burns,
Enwrapt in flames like hell's sulphureous tides,
The crackling of the vessel's rifted sides,
That now, as rise and fall the waves by turns,
Sinks buried in the dark unfathom'd deep;
Now rocks upon the billow's ridgy steep,
While all beneath in foamy vapour dies:
Such sounds, of power to force the dead to rise,
Awake the conscious pair from love's enchanted sleep.

XVI.

Wild darts Amanda from his fond caress—
" Our doom is seal'd!" she cries with dread affright.
Conscious of guilt, he prays the guardian spright
To shield, at least, Amanda from distress—
At least for her he dares the god implore—
In vain!—no pray'rs his former grace restore:
He comes th' avenger of the guilty soul,
Stern to inflict the doom—the horn and bowl,
The fairy gifts, are gone—he hears and saves no more!

XVII.

Meanwhile the captain calls th' assembled crew—
" Ye see your doom—we all at once expire!
" The stormy wave, rude blast, and lightning fire,
" With still increasing rage the ship pursue!
" We soon must perish in the wat'ry grave!
" Never till now such tempests swell'd the wave!
" At once we sink in ocean's yawning womb!
" Haply the guilt of one has seal'd our doom:
" One whom the lightning seeks—his death the rest
may save!

XVIII.

" Implore offended heaven to mark by lot
" The destin'd victim with unerring arm—
" Is there among you whom my words alarm?
" Thus doom'd to die together on the spot,
" Who, but the wretch self-judg'd, has cause to fear?"
He spoke; and all approve the words they hear.
The priest the chalice brings, the lots they cast,
Round him they fall upon their knees aghast!
He breathes a prayer to heaven, and bids the crew draw near.

XIX.

Fill'd with dire bodings, but in manly mood,
Huon comes forth, and as he passes by,
On poor Amanda turns his soothing eye:
She, mute and agoniz'd, and bloodless stood,
An alabaster image, icy cold!
He draws—oh, fate! oh, Oberon! behold,
He draws the lot of death with trembling hand!
Mute, with fixt gaze, the rest around him stand,
The while he reads his doom, pale, patient, uncontroll'd.

XX.

" Thine, Oberon!" he cries, " 'tis thine the deed!
" Full well I feel it, though I view thee not—
" Stern god! I feel thy presence in this lot!
" Thou did'st forewarn me of harsh fate decreed—
" Guilt dares not sue for pardon—just my doom!
" Hurl me, relentless spirit! to the tomb!
" Spare but Amanda!—mine alone the guilt!
" Be on my head thy hoarded vengeance spilt!
" I bow—nor shall these lips to breathe a hope presume!

XXI.

" Ye, whom my death now rescues, shed one tear,
" One pious tear, to mourn my hapless doom!
" Victim of ruthless fate in youthful bloom!
" Not wholly guiltless ends my brief career,
" Yet honour firmly trod my path before—
" Ah! tranc'd in bliss, the oath I rashly swore,
" And warning voice one moment I forgot!
" My sole offence man's universal lot,
" To be one moment frail, then lost for evermore!

XXII.

" I, doom'd by frailty, fall in youthful prime!
" Yet to my fate without a murmur bend—
" No, I repent not, though stern death impend!—
" Is love a sin? may Heaven forgive the crime!
" All other duties from remembrance fade.
" Ah! save by love how could'st thou be repaid?
" Thou! who for love did'st every hope resign!
" Not ocean's depth can dim its light divine;
" No, it immortal glows, and lives in Huon's shade!"

XXIII.

Here swells his heart—he holds his icy hand
O'er his sunk brow; then mute and still remains.
What monster, steel'd to woe, the tear restrains?
The hearts of all, who round in silence stand,
Dissolve with pity.—Sterner thoughts arise,
And pity's transient gleam unnotic'd dies!
His death is safety—'tis the life of all!
Heaven, in his doom, decrees that guilt should fall!
How shall frail man resist the judgment of the skies?

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

OBERON, CANTO VII.

Vol. 2. Page 13.

H. Fuseli R.A. pinxt. I. Neagle Sc.

Published March 1st 1806, by Cadell & Davies, Strand.

XXIV.

The storm, that from the time Sir Huon spoke
Had seem'd awhile its fury to assuage,
Now smote the ocean with redoubled rage:
Incessant lightnings on the vessel broke—
"Perish the wretch!" bursts forth the general cry:
The captain beckons, "Fate forbids reply!
"Since no delay your life can longer save,
"And death more fiercely bellows from the wave,
"Perish! it must be so—by Heaven condemn'd to die!"

XXV.

The Paladin moves on with steady pace:
At once amid the crew, th' empassion'd fair,
So long the lifeless statue of despair,
Darts wild with woe to Huon's last embrace,
Loose, like a lion's mane, her ringlets sweep
Before the blast! With eyes that cannot weep,
With love to frenzy wrought, with high-swoln breast,
And circling arms round Huon closely prest,
She hurls him with herself amid the swallowing deep!

XXVI.

And what but force the trusty Fatma saves
From willing death? She views their clasping forms
Entwin'd like tendrils, by the billowy storms
Roll'd onward, faintly struggling through the waves—
And when, soon lost, she views them, ah! no more,
Her shrieks of anguish ring the vessel o'er.
Who shall assuage her heart-consuming pain?
Who to her arms Amanda bring again?
Who all she lov'd replace, and hope extinct restore?

XXVII.

Meanwhile, no sooner had the foamy waves
Touch'd the knight's head, than, lo! the stormy tide
Seems, as if lull'd by magic, to subside!
The thunder's boding peal no longer raves,
The whirlwind, gradual hush'd, at distance dies!
The foaming floods that dash'd against the skies
Smooth as a silver lake in silence sleep!
With jocund oar the vessel cuts the deep,
And, ere the sun twice sets, secure in harbour lies.

XXVIII.

But, ah! what now your fate, devoted pair!
Hopeless ye float upon the boundless wave!
Faint and more faint, now sinking to the grave!
Sight, feeling, memory, lost in dead despair,
And no sensations, save of love, remain:
Twin'd as in one their clasping arms enchain:
Each on the other sinks resign'd to death,
And breathing only in each other's breath,
Thus breast to breast they float along th' unpitying main!

XXIX.

And can'st thou, Oberon! without remorse,
Thus see them perish? once their guardian friend,
Thou seest, thou weep'st! ah! why no more defend?
He turns, and flies from each devoted corse!—
They perish!—Fear it not!—new hopes expand!
Soon will they reach, unhurt, the neighb'ring strand:
Death o'er them vainly flaps his iron wing,
His dart is blunted by the magick ring,
Pledge of connubial love on Rezia's plighted hand.

XXX.

The blest possessor of this magick ring,
This ring, great Solomon's all-powerful seal,
The common lot of man can never feel.
Is he imprison'd? locks wide open spring!
Iron and adamant beneath it fail!
Will he from Trente to distant Memphis sail?
He wings along the air his viewless course.
He who possesses it, and knows its force,
Can, as he wills, alike o'er earth and hell prevail!

XXXI.

He can displace the moon, and from her sphere
Draw her at will; beneath the noontide ray
Veil'd in a vapour from the face of day
Onward he glides unheard by mortal ear,
Nor visible to eye of piercing spright.
Shall any being stand before his sight?
Let him but press the ring, at once display'd,
Be it or man, or beast, or ghost, or shade,
Lo! at his beck it bows, the slave of magick might.

XXXII.

This ring, thy charmed life, Amanda! saves;
Thine, and thy Huon's, who by love carest,
Chain'd by thy arm, and fetter'd to thy breast,
Unconscious how, O wonder! from the waves
Is cast with thee upon a rocky strand.
Yes, ye are sav'd! ye rest, indeed, on land:
But hard your bed!—the island round appears
One vast volcanick waste, the wreck of years:
No grass is seen to wave, no verdant leaf expand.

XXXIII.

Yet in their first intoxicating bliss
No fears of future wo their joys impede:
Thus hopelessly, thus wonderfully freed,
Snatch'd from the bosom of the deep abyss,
Lone, uncontroll'd, unwitness'd, arm in arm;
This soul-felt-joy, unutterable charm,
So in itself concentres all delight,
No earthly object steals upon their sight;
Yet, soon their state forlorn but wakes more fell alarm.

XXXIV.

Drench'd with the billows of the surging tides,
Weary they wander on the desert strand.
All solitary round them frowns the land,
The cloudless sun in flaming glory rides:
And while her dripping robes are hung to dry
On some bare rock, ah! how shall Rezia fly
The beams that dart upon her skin of snow?
Fierce burns the sand, the fiery pebbles glow,
And, ah! no leafy bow'rs a shelt'ring shade supply.

XXXV.

At last where opening rocks a cleft disclose,
By Huon's searching eye a cave is seen:
Faint, in his arms he bears the Eastern queen,
And lays her in its shade to cool repose:
Then with hoar moss, and many a sun-burnt reed,
(Alas! how grateful in the hour of need)
He strews her bed—they sigh, their glances meet,
That pour unutterable solace sweet,
For every present want, and worse, if worse succeed.

XXXVI.

O love! thou only balm of every wo
That preys on man! intoxicating sweet,
When soul weds soul, and hearts each other meet!
What joys with thine compare, thou heaven below?
How swift the sad reverse! how chang'd their state!
Ah! happy pair! but now ye tow'r'd elate,
Fav'rites of fortune! now, from empire thrown,
Scarce 'scap'd with life, abandon'd, and alone!
And yet by love consol'd, how blest your envied fate!

XXXVII.

Not golden halls by pomp imperial trod,
Can boast a grace, that like this savage grot
Charms Rezia's eye! and in this desert spot
He to her bosom prest becomes a god!
The rugged flint on which their limbs repose,
Where love with mould'ring moss the cavern strews,
Seems richer than the pearl-embroider'd bed,
And far more fragrant than fresh odours shed
From lily's perfum'd breath, or scent of vernal rose!

XXXVIII.

Oh! that th' illusive bliss that feeds the heart,
So swift dissolves away! unmark'd indeed,
Yet hour on hour darts on with lightning speed—
And other food must sustenance impart—
What friend will aid them? On this arid strand,
This bleak, unknown, inhospitable land,
Where mountains hurl'd on mountains frown around,
To sooth keen famine what can here be found,
Now gone the golden bowl, withdrawn the fairy hand?

XXXIX.

With swift unwearied foot the youthful knight
Climbs up the rocks, and darts around his gaze:
From side to side what horrid views amaze!
Misshapen crags and ruins shock his sight!
Where'er he tearful turns, no valley green,
Cool glen, or meadow, smiles the clifts between—
No branches beckon him with golden fruit:
Thin heath, and straggling brambles scarcely shoot,
And scarce a thistle blooms amid th' unvarying scene!

XL.

" Thus," he exclaims, by desperate anguish stung,
While on his lips the flames of frenzy burn,
" Thus shall I, wretch! with empty hand return,
" Where Rezia dies, by gnawing famine wrung!
" For whom alone my life is worth a care!
" I, her sole hope, must hopeless back repair—
" I, who in every heart-pulse feel her glow,
" No more, for one fleet day, can sooth her wo,
" Or snatch her sinking soul from comfortless despair!

XLI.

" Shall I, then, see thee on this barbarous shore,
" Thou wonder of the world! in pangs unknown,
" Thus waste away? O thou! for me alone
" Whelm'd in such woes, that fate can add no more—
" Who didst for me alone that lot resign,
" Thy stars once promis'd, lot on earth divine,
" Till misery bound thee in my cruel chain!
" But now (here raving frenzy burns his brain)
" Keen famine o'er thee hangs, and eyes thy swift
decline!"

XLII.

Loudly he shrieks in agonizing smart,
Then sinks to earth, all hopeless of relief;
At last a ray that seems to sooth his grief,
A gleam of solace steals upon his heart:
He struggles through the darkness of despair,
Once more looks round, in vain, with wistful air:
The sun-beams streak the western wave with gold,
When lo! his fascinated eyes behold
The fairest fruit that grows: oh! then how wondrous fair!

XLIII.

Half under foliage hid, and half illum'd,
The fruit low-nodding on its broad-leav'd arms
Gleams through the shade, and tempts with glowing charms:
In tints how bright! in fragrance how perfum'd!
Before him as it shines, from far display'd,
He thinks each former pang at once o'erpaid;
He runs—he breaks it—glancing up to heaven,
He breathes mute thanks for hopeless blessings given,
And rapture speeds his feet with flying wing array'd.

XLIV.

But Rezia in these long forsaken hours,
(Cast on a spot where all awakens fear,
Where every sound strikes horrour on the ear,
And death-like silence more and more o'erpow'rs,)
Reft of her Huon, hopeless, and alone,
Long check'd the tear, and curb'd the rising groan:
While with faint hand to strew her flinty bed
She dragg'd hoar moss, and rushes widely spread,
And weeds along the beach in many a layer thrown.

XLV.

Worn as she was, the toil her strength o'erpow'rs,
She can no more—her knees beneath her bend—
Faint on the shore her sinking limbs extend!
While hunger's gnawing fang her heart devours:
She pants—she faints, sore parch'd with burning heat!
Here, where all fails, no friend her wo to greet,
How dire her lot!—why, Huon! why delay?
Perhaps some wo unknown—some beast of prey—
The very thought is death, her pulse forgets to beat.

XLVI.

And fancy with the darkest hue of fear
Shapes every thought that most her bosom grieves:
And sad despair each shadowy fear believes!
If but a billow beat, death strikes her ear!
With tottering step reviv'd by mere despair,
High on a rock that tow'rs sublime in air
She gazes round her, heartless, far and wide,
When, ere the last low sun-beam gilds the tide,
She views, O gracious Heaven!—he flies!—himself is there!

XLVII.

Wide wave her beckoning arms, deep heaves her breath,
While from afar the treasure he displays:
Not fairer in creation's infant days
Lur'd the first wife to taste the tree of death!
The lover holds it as in triumph, high,
In the last rays, that now about to die,
Paint with the colour of resplendent fire
The fruit whose polish'd rind inflames desire:
Amanda scarce believes her pleasure-sparkling eye.

XLVIII.

"Heaven!" she exclaims, "at last with pitying grace
"Has deign'd to sooth our wo!"—a tear distends
Her grateful eye, but ere the tear descends,
Glad Huon clasps her in his warm embrace—
Her low and languid tone, her heavy head,
That sinks upon his breast like one half dead,
Urges his speed—upon the stone they rest,
And while new rapture shot from breast to breast,
He cuts in twain the fruit where hope already fed.

XLIX.

Fall from my feeble hand, weak pencil, fall!
Canst thou, too vengeful spright! when thus they grieve,
Sport with despair, and life's last hope deceive?
Alas! more bitter than the bitterest gall—
Ah—mouldy through and through the fruit of gold!
Pale as the cheek with death-dew icy cold,
They on each other gaze; heart-broken pair!
They speak not, move not, but with horrour stare,
As if by thunder pierc'd, from cloudless æther roll'd.

L.

A stream of bitter tears in fury flow
From Huon's eyes: those tears, whose struggling flood
Despair drives forth from misery's stagnate blood,
When foams the lip, when starting eyeballs glow,
And the teeth grind convuls'd with maniack ire—
But, though for ever fled, sweet hope retire,
Yet still, and meek and mild, with rayless eyes,
Parch'd lip, and pallid cheek, Amanda sighs,
" Oh! let me on thy breast—'tis all I ask—expire!

LI.

" And ah! how sweet to die upon thy breast!
" And thanks to the avenger, kind in death,
" That on thy heart I breathe my farewell breath!"—
She speaks in falt'ring whisper half supprest,
Then on his bosom sinks with closing eyes.
Thus beaten by the storm a lily lies
With drooping head. Up Huon swiftly springs,
Round her his arms in hopeless frenzy flings,
And tow'rds the sheltering cave with wing'd impatience flies.

LII.

" O for a drop of water! only one!"
Half-mad, half-praying, "gracious Heav'n!" he cries—
" I, I am guilty—let my death suffice!
" O let thy vengeance fall on me alone!
" To me let nature round become a grave—
" But, ah! relenting Power! that angel save!
" O guide me to the traces of a spring,
" Oh! to some neighb'ring fount my footsteps bring,
" Cool on her fiery lip to pour the crystal wave!"

LIII.

And forth he hastes, impatient to explore,
And swears he sooner will himself entomb
Mid rocks where thirst and famine life consume,
Than, reft of hope, revisit her once more!
In tears he cries, " That Pow'r, who from his sphere,
" When the young ravens cry bows down his ear,
" Who deigns to notice if a sparrow fall,
" He will not suffer thee, prime work of all,
" Thou masterpiece of Heaven! to waste, unpitied,
here."

LIV.

He speaks: and hark! at once a viewless rill
Glides with near murmur on his sharpen'd ear—
He bends in breathless agony to hear:
It murmurs on—wild joys his bosom thrill—
He looks to heaven, and ere the twilight ray
That gleam'd upon the mountains, died away,
Casts on the fountain his ecstatic view;
Scoops in a muscle-shell the heavenly dew,
And wild to Rezia flies ere death had seiz'd his prey.

LV.

More gratefully the healing rill to sip,
He bears Amanda where its current flows:
At once new life with quickening vigour glows;
From every drop that dews her fiery lip,
Fresh beats the pulse that dances in her veins:
Not wine itself such strengthening pow'r contains:
More sweet than milk, more soft than oil the flood,
Its genial spirit renovates the blood,
And in oblivion drowns the sense of sharpest pains.

LVI.

Fir'd by new hope, on that enchanted spot,
Warm from the heart, devotion wings their breath
To him who twice had rescu'd them from death!
Their meeting arms embrace, all wo forgot:
And when their lips once more had drain'd the bowl,
Sleep, balm of grief, mild soother of the soul,
Deigns with light touch their weary limbs unbind;
And on the moss that fring'd the rill, reclin'd,
Soft o'er their languid frame his genial influence stole.

LVII.

The glimmering beams of twilight scarcely play
On Huon's brow, than forth th' adventurer goes,
And to new perils dares his life expose:
From ledge to ledge pursues his fearless way,
Where broken crags the precipice divide:
Creeps thro' each cleft, and climbs each jutting side.
Oft backward bends his still-returning gaze;
Oft deeply sighs, as long and lone he strays,
To view the desert isle, untrodden far and wide.

LVIII.

But, at the last, south-eastward from the cave,
A path swift-winding to a little cove
Leads where encircling rocks that tower'd above,
Fenc'd a wild copse: there, ripe before him wave
A date-tree's spreading branches bow'd with fruit—
Swift as in air enfranchis'd spirits shoot,
That from the pains of purgatory fly,
And, scap'd from flames, ascend their native sky,
Thus, as if wing'd to heaven, he springs with feathery foot.

LIX.

His eager hand a branch luxuriant breaks,
Downward he leaps, and speeds with nimble flight,
To charm Amanda's soul with new delight:
On this, the moment that Amanda wakes,
Her pleasure-tranced eye shall sweetly rest.
Graceful within herself the slumberer prest,
Lay, as he came, enwrapt in soft repose:
Her cheek warm-blossom'd like a vernal rose,
And scarce her robe confin'd her half-imprison'd breast.

LX.

Bent in transporting gaze, love's pure delight,
In speechless wonder, Huon at her side
Stands like the genius of the sleeping bride,
And feasts at large his never sated sight,
On matchless beauties, that with fresh surprise
View'd o'er and o'er seem ever new to rise.
He sees the victim who for him resign'd,
For him alone, that state which tempts mankind
To yield each heavenly hope a willing sacrifice!

LXI

"'Tis love has reft thee from thy native throne—
"Ah! wherefore? thou, while luxury round thee
smil'd,
"Nurs'd by voluptuous Asia! happy child!
"Lo! here thou slumber'st, stretch'd upon a stone!
"Thy canopy yon clouds above thee spread,
"A little moss beneath thy only bed!
"Prey to each adverse change of angry skies.
"Yet here how blest, where thistles scarce arise,
"If these uncultur'd fruits yet snatch thee from the dead.

LXII.

" And I, ordain'd by iron fate to spread
" The baneful influence of my doom severe
" O'er the last friend that weeps my sigh to hear;
" I, who should shield thy unprotected head,
" 'Tis I who doom thee to severest pains!
" Of all thy gifts, lo! these the bitter gains!
" Ah! reft of every friend, save me alone,
" I swell thy tear, I deepen every groan,
" I to whom nought on earth but hopeless life remains."

LXIII.

This heart-tormenting anguish, undesign'd,
More loudly plains, and wakes the lovely bride—
She views enraptur'd Huon by her side;
Yet still the traces of a wounded mind
Low'r'd on his brow, that witness'd deep distress,
Which joy and glowing love but half suppress—
He gives the fruit, 'tis all that famine craves.
This and the beverage fresh from crystal waves
Seems an o'erflowing feast of heav'nly happiness.

LXIV.

A feast for gods! how sinks in still repose
Her brow on Huon's breast! 'Twas Huon brought
The fruit that nurtures her—'Twas Huon sought
At dawn the rocks around to sooth her woes;
Rous'd from short sleep for her o'er wilds to rove—
Thus stands the balance in the page of love:
Each deed untold, for him by Rezia done.
Thus she permits her eye, his cheering sun,
On him pure joy to beam, and every cloud remove.

LXV.

Her smile, her touching air, the pure excess
Of generous love, more deeply wound his heart:
With eyes whence drops like blood from anguish start,
And looks that speechless agony express,
He sinks upon the bosom of the fair—
"And shall I not, O wretch abhorr'd! despair?
"And curse each star that glimmer'd on the night
"That gave me birth, and loath the baleful light,
"When in a mother's arm I wept her new-born care?

LXVI.

" O bride ador'd! thro' me, and thro' my crime,
" To see thee thus from every bliss remov'd,
" All that in Bagdad serv'd, rever'd, and lov'd;
" From every hope, that once in happier time
" I fondly promis'd in my native land:
" To see thee wreck'd on this deserted strand,
" And yet to witness how without lament
" Thou smil'st as one with misery content!—
" Spare me, vindictive Pow'r! I sink beneath thy hand!"

LXVII.

Amanda beams on him that look divine
In which heaven opens on his eye confest:
Beams that pure joy which sooths her soul to rest—
' Huon! thy wo alone embitters mine!
' Oh! let that lip belov'd from words refrain
' That bow my spirit with severest pain:
' Hate not thyself, nor him whose trials wound;
' Not punishments but trials press around;
' The God that smites his child will sooth to peace again!

LXVIII.

'Our blended fates, since that enchanting dream,
'Nurse of our love, this solemn truth disclose:
'At will, the viewless author of our woes
'Heaven, or the fairy god, or fortune deem:
'Enough: a wonder chain'd our hearts in one—
'If aught be wonderful beneath the sun,
'Our love, our life, alike a wonder call!
'Who wing'd our flight from Bagdad's hostile wall?
'Who sav'd when o'er our head tempestuous billows run?

LXIX.

'And when already dying, hope withdrew,
'As scarce we scap'd the waves, what guardian power
'Preserv'd? the God who rules the present hour!
'He bath'd my fiery lip with healing dew;
'And, mid the terrours of that dreadful night,
'Woke to new life my faintly-glimmering light—
'This unexpected fruit on which I feed,
'Comes from the Pow'r, who in the hour of need,
'Turns to the cry of wo his long-averted sight!

LXX.

'Say more—if our destruction be decreed,
'Oh! why again by wondrous aid relieve?
'Tis my heart speaks, no treacherous hopes deceive;
'He who so oft has deign'd through darkness lead,
'Dooms not our souls to grief a destin'd prey.
'Oh! if the anchor of our hope give way,
'Let us embrace this faith the heart to cheer:
'All that now pangs, at once, may disappear,
'All change—and bright once more beam forth meridian day.

LXXI.

'Press on my sight each shape of torturing fear,
'Withdrawn the wondrous hand still friendly found—
'Year after year let ills on ills abound,
'No friend to help, and not a hope to cheer:
'In this lone desert let Amanda find
'A grave, unvisited by human-kind,
'No sigh in secret shall my doom deplore.
'Oh! could I freely choose my lot once more,
'I follow where thou lead'st, with thee in misery join'd.

LXXII.

'At once to part from all that I possest,
'I reck it not, so Huon firm remains:
'The world for me no other wish contains:
'Let me repose on Huon's faithful breast,
'Though low on earth, I envy none their state,
'Who boast their bliss on golden thrones elate.
'Tis in thy feelings that alone I feel:
'If but a sigh from thee in secret steal,
'Tis then alone I mourn a thousand times my fate.

LXXIII.

'Speak not of that which thy Amanda gave,
'Or bore for thee; my heart the whole approv'd—
'I did it for myself, because I lov'd:
'No—not the tenfold horrours of the grave
'Rack like the thrilling fear from thee to part!
'Whate'er our lot, the love that warms thy heart
'Shall sooth my grief—my love shall lighten thine!
'Heap wo on me! I never will repine!
'Here is my hand—thus pledg'd, I scorn fate's deadly dart!

LXXIV.

'Ever at early dawn, and close of day,
'Oh! be Amanda's toil to thine allied—
'Labour shall lead me smiling by thy side,
'So but a smile of thine my toil repay.
'Love that inspires me shall each sinew strain,
'Brace every nerve, replenish every vein;
'With proud delight the lowest service pay.
'If I increase thy joy, thy woe allay,
'I would not change my lot o'er all the world to reign.'

LXXV.

Thus spoke the matchless bride, and chastely prest,
Seal of her word, his mouth with angel kiss:
He feels its force—at once entranc'd in bliss,
His soul the magick of her lip confest.
How chang'd the scene! his ravish'd eyes behold
Mid the rude rocks a paradise unfold!
Away each trace of desolation fled,
The pebbly shore with pearls is overspread,
A marble hall the grot, the rocks o'erlaid with gold;

LXXVI.

New courage fires him as his lip she prest—
How fades the world before such heavenly charms!
Enraptur'd Huon clasps her in his arms—
High bounds his heart against her open breast—
"Witness, thou earth! thou heav'n! thou orb of light!
" Witness my vow this angel to requite:
" I swear it on this breast, unspotted shrine,
" Altar of innocence and truth divine!
" Hurl me, if swerve my soul, to realms of endless night!

LXXVII.

" If, where thy hallow'd name is grav'd with fire,
" If e'er this wandering heart thy love resign,
" Or for a moment slight thy worth divine,
" Till patient woe exhausts the wood-god's ire—
" If sunk through feebleness, or worn with care,
" I shun, all, all to suffer, all to dare
" For thee, O bride belov'd!—Thou, orb of light!
" Strike my low'd head, with fiery vengeance smite,
" And earth and sea refuse to shield me from despair!"

LXXVIII.

He spoke; her bosom glow'd, again the fair
Gifts with a grateful kiss th' exalted youth—
Love with new pledges seals their mutual truth;
Each strengthening each the iron yoke to bear,
Unconquer'd by the blows of adverse fate:
Still to look up with confidence elate,
Where hope, sole guide, thro' paths by misery trod,
Lifts his bright torch before the throne of God,
Who hears when misery pleads at heaven's unclosing gate.

LXXIX.

And both, ere daylight died, the shelt'ring bay,
Where bloom'd the palm-tree, eagerly explore;
And here and there a branch profusely bore
Rich golden clusters, that their search repay.
And now, like children, the delighted pair,
While hung on waving boughs the scanty fare,
Think the luxuriant fruit can never fail.
And thus gay wandering through the palmy vale,
Eve after eve they pass, nor feel nor fear a care;

LXXX.

But, ah! the treasure fails!—a year, a year
With leaden foot must drag its tedious pace,
Ere autumn's tardy growth the fruit replace,
While want each ling'ring day grows more severe!
Though love, devoid of wealth, is richly blest,
Though in itself of all at once possest,
Yet now, when famine keen and keener grew,
What in these wilds shall nature's waste renew?
Who weave once more the charm that sooth'd to transient rest?

LXXXI.

Roots which keen hunger can alone devour,
To suffering nature seem delicious fare;
And when at last o'erdone with toil and care,
He homeward bears, at twilight's closing hour,
Wild berries gather'd from the barren stone,
Eggs from the cliff where sea-mews lonely moan,
Or fish half gnaw'd, of cormorant the prey;
These scanty gleanings of his toilsome day
Content his famish'd bride, who grieves for him alone.

LXXXII.

Sport of rude blasts, the desolated trees
Strew with sear leaf the melancholy shore;
Through naked boughs the wintry tempests roar:
And hoary mists, that sweep along the seas,
Veil in dark clouds the sun's meridian light;
In sad confusion air and sea unite:
High o'er the strand tempestuous ocean breaks,
The furious tide its rocky boundary shakes,
Spangling with silver foam the cliff's aërial height.

LXXXIII.

At last, dire want that more and more subdues,
Drives the poor exiles from their fav'rite bay:
Yet up the mountains as they wind their way,
Unsated famine still their step pursues,
Scowls on all sides, and bars their further flight.
And now, half wild with anguish and delight,
Huon mid anxious hopes, mid thrilling fears,
And boding miseries, steep'd in tender tears,
Views the sweet pledge of love swell gradual on his sight.

LXXXIV.

And oft Amanda clasps her husband's hand
In silence on her heart, a tearful smile
Gleams in her soul-transporting look the while:
Love weaves a new indissoluble band—
A nameless joy, a solemn still desire,
A mother's love, her boding breast inspire:
Sensations sweet, yet strange, till now unknown,
Scenes of maternal tenderness foreshown,
Thrill through her glowing soul, and sanctify their fire.

LXXXV.

And this sweet pledge a firm assurance proves,
That viewless powers direct their destin'd fates:
It tells her that the God whose word creates,
With all a father's warmth his children loves.
Thus cheer'd, she bears her load without a sigh,
And every care suppress, her Huon nigh,
The radiant sun of hope is ever seen
To beam sweet solace from her eye serene,
And raise his faltering trust that seems about to die.

LXXXVI.

'Tis true, he swerves not from the oath he swore,
Pledg'd to his bride, and Heaven's attested power;
Yet deeper anguish loads each passing hour,
And barbs the pang too sorely felt before;
That touching sight adds horrour to his doom!
For her he bleeds—hope dares no more presume—
If yet, a little longer yet, delay'd,
Comes not (ah! whence shall come) unhop'd for aid,
With him, his wife and child sink hourly to the tomb.

LXXXVII.

And every day, for many a lingering week,
Exhausted Huon, time succeeding time,
Toil'd with slow footstep up the brow sublime,
And bending from the mountain's topmost peak
Strain'd his dim eye o'er ocean far and wide;
But ah! the weary wretch no vessel spy'd!
The gleam of hope that at the day-spring rose,
Set with the sun—from dawn till twilight close,
Before him ocean roll'd one vast unbroken tide.

LXXXVIII.

One sole sad hope remain'd—despair alone
Forc'd the poor wretch to dare th' adventurous deed;
Though danger threaten, and though death succeed,
Ah! what to him who wastes in wilds unknown!
Fir'd by the thought his dauntless spirit glows—
Onward he hastes though death itself oppose!
One rocky barrier yet remain'd untried:
Enormous crags o'erhang its pathless side,
And seem from earthly foot forbidden ways to close.

LXXXIX.

Now urg'd to daring deeds by keen distress,
To climb the mountains seems a labour light;
Love with fleet wing above the Alpine height
Waves his bright torch, and guides to sure success.
Each obstacle subdu'd, his dauntless mind
May o'er these low'ring crags a passage find—
Through nature's wild entrenchments force a way,
Where verdure blooms beneath a fairer day;
Perchance where pity dwells the guest of human kind!

XC.

To save Amanda's heart a pang severe,
His lips th' impending danger still conceal—
Stern death encounter'd for their mutual weal;
She, silent sufferer, inly drinks the tear:
What words, at parting, can their anguish tell!
Each faltering lip scarce breathes one last farewell:
Yet in his eye a dauntless spirit glows,
A nameless confidence that sooths her woes,
And bids reviving hope the clouds of grief dispel.

XCI.

And now he stands beneath o'ershadowing crags
That low'r before him like a ruin'd world,
On every side in wild confusion hurl'd:
A shapeless chaos of extinguish'd slags,
Where burst a mountain of volcanick fire;
With rocks, that, split by elemental ire,
In rude magnificence a thousand fold,
Here plunge, to the abyss of Tartarus roll'd,
There lift their stormy brows, and high to heaven aspire!

XCII.

Urg'd by despair he dares each peril brave—
Oft is he forc'd with desperate grasp, to climb
From crag to crag, the precipice sublime;
While death beneath him points the yawning grave:
Now like a chamois, bound in airy flight:
And oft enormous fragments dark as night
Bar all access—he wanders back forlorn!
Oft with torn hand he grasps th' o'erhanging thorn
That bows beneath the wretch, plung'd headlong from the height.

XCIII.

But when exhausted strength seems nearly fled,
Amanda's smile his flying soul recalls:
Does nature shrink, when danger most appals?
Hope, at her image, lifts again its head—
Not unrewarded Il ion's zeal remains,
Th' heroick youth just recompense obtains—
The pathway widening as his step ascends,
Smooth and more smooth before him gradual bends,
And seems to lead his foot to rest on peaceful plains!

OBERON.

CANTO VIII.

I.

Now the first range of cliffs was overpast,
And, like a rocky hall before him lay,
By fir-trees vaulted from the light of day,
A little dell with twilight shade o'ercast.
His wearied limbs with nameless shudders thrill,
Slow as he totters down the gloomy hill.
It seems as if terrestrial footsteps rude
On the dark shrine of loneliness intrude,
And dare invade the realm of lifeless shadows still.

II.

Along a path, whose gentle windings steal
Down the low dell he finds a narrow bridge;
And where it spans the rocks from ridge to ridge,
Hoarse waves beneath in eddying circles wheel;
The changing scene his active spirits fir'd:
Up the steep mount, with nimble force inspir'd,
Gay springs Sir Huon where the pathway leads,
Then slowly sinks mid rocks whose height impedes
All hope of further flight beyond this spot retir'd.

III.

And now the little path he long had trod
Is, as by magick, vanish'd from his eyes—
In vain to find its trace the wanderer tries—
At length, where mid the cliffs wild bushes nod,
A little opening indistinctly seen,
Leads where a path that steals the thorns between,
In narrow circles winding round and round,
Through the steep mountains to a dell profound,
Sinks down step after step—wild fairy work, I ween.

IV.

From the last step as Huon faint descends,
Gay smiles, like Paradise, the lovely scene:
A man before him stands of noble mien,
Below his breast his silver beard extends,
A girdle broad around his body roll'd,
Confines his russet mantle's simple fold,
And a long rosary at his girdle hung;
By such plain signs, these lonely rocks among,
All may aread his state without conjecture bold.

V.

But weak with hunger, with fatigue o'erdone,
Amid these cliffs, beneath whose dreary height
No trace of man had ever cheer'd his sight,
That vainly watch'd each slow-returning sun;
Where from the rocks that every way surround,
O'ershadowing fir-trees spread a gloom profound,
Huon, astonish'd at his beard of snow,
Deems the strange sight a shadowy spectre-show,
And prostrate at his feet falls breathless to the ground.

VI.

Nor less the hermit wond'ring than the knight,
Shrinks back a step—Peace sooths again his mien,
And a mild firmness marks his voice serene—
" If thou hast yet a hope, tormented spright!
" (Sure such thou art!) to free thee from thy pain,
" O speak! to ears of flesh and blood explain,
" What pow'rful penitence, what healing pray'r,
" May snatch thee from the gulf of deep despair,
" And harbour thee in heaven, where joys eternal reign?"

VII.

Worn out, exhausted, pale with ceaseless wo,
As Huon sunk, the father's erring mind
Had greeted him as one of ghostly kind,
Doom'd for his sins to wander to and fro:
But when at last recovering from surprise,
Each view'd the other with undazzled eyes,
And Huon tells his woes, and dangers run,
The father clasps him like a long-lost son,
And welcomes him to all his little cell supplies.

VIII.

And leads him to a spring that playful burst,
Pure as the vernal air, as crystal clear,
Down a smooth rock that rose his cloister near:
And while the knight allays his burning thirst,
The hermit from his garden plucks in haste
Fruits of all kinds most tempting to the taste,
And in a basket plac'd his guest before:
Fruits, which a genial clime profusely bore,
And well repaid his toil, that till'd the lonely waste.

IX.

The hermit doubts with ever new surprise,
How man, ungifted with ætherial sail,
To cut the clouds, and dart before the gale,
Could overtop these crags that brave the skies;
And reach the spot, where more than thirty years
He, far sequester'd from the world of tears,
Had dwelt in peace as in the silent grave—
"O'er you their wings protecting angels wave—
"But now the lovely bride our sole concern appears.

X.

" A lonely way, secure, unknown to all,
" (None but myself can find its secret trace)
" In half the time that led thy wearied pace
" Across the barriers of yon rocky wall,
" Shall guide you both to this still haunt again.
" Share all I have, where peace and quiet reign—
" For thee my paradise its sweets bestows:
" Soft upon heath can innocence repose,
" And fed on pulse the blood flows pure through every vein."

XI.

Sir Huon warmly thanks the good old man,
Who takes himself his staff to show the way;
And, for his safe return without delay,
Unpuzzled by the maze that round him ran,
Fresh twigs of fir along the pathway strows.
And ere the beams of day in ocean close,
Already Rezia on the mountain's head
Drinks the pure stream of health around her shed,
Where fresh from cloudless heaven the breezy fragrance flows.

XII.

In other worlds, in realms of fairy land
She seems to pass; and sure had never seen
The heaven so blue, the lap of earth so green,
Or leaf so fresh on vernal bow'r expand;
For where the mountains round in guardian rows
Shelter the bosom that their heights enclose,
And fence from blasts that on their summits beat,
Grapes richly clustering swell with genial heat,
Dark hangs the ripening fig, the golden orange glows.

XIII.

Rezia at once entranc'd in holy bliss,
Aw'd by his look that beam'd celestial grace,
Bows, as before the genius of the place,
And prints his wrinkled hand with pious kiss.
Touch'd by his gracious mien and friendly air,
His beard that swept his breast, and silver hair,
Her soul the stranger as her sire reveres—
A second look has banish'd all her fears—
Each reads the other's heart, nor finds a stranger there.

XIV.

Plain on his noble aspect shone confest,
Grandeur beneath a cowl that mildly gleam'd;
His eye a smile on all creation beam'd:
And though the touch of time had gently prest
His neck, soft bow'd beneath the weight of years,
Sublimely rais'd to heaven, his brow appears
The shrine of peace; and like a sun-gilt height,
Where never earthly mist obscured the light,
Above the stormy world its tranquil summit rears.

XV.

Time from his features long had worn away
The rust of earth, and passion's gloomy frown:
He would not stoop to grasp a falling crown,
Nor bend the sceptre of a world to sway.
Free from the vain desires that earth enthral,
Free from vain terrours that mankind appal,
Untouch'd by pain, and unassail'd by fear,
To truth alone he turn'd his mental ear:
Alone to nature turn'd, and her sweet simple call.

XVI.

Ere from the storm of life to peace restor'd,
He call'd himself Alonzo. Leon bore
The noble infant on her pleasant shore,
And rear'd him for the service of her lord.
And there with thousands like himself deceiv'd,
He chas'd the shades, still cheating, still believ'd,
That tempt the sight, yet still the touch elude;
And like the chemist's stone in vain pursu'd,
Leave the fond wretch they lur'd in hopeless misery
griev'd.

XVII.

And when he thus had wasted golden youth
Mid kingly smiles, and in the drunken mood
Of self-delusion drain'd his wealth and blood,
With zeal unthank'd, and unacknowledg'd truth,
In the fair morn of favour's roseate day,
By sudden fall his fetters drop away:
On the wide world's tempestuous ocean cast,
How happy from the storm escap'd at last,
To save the wreck of life, a want-devoted prey!

XVIII.

Yet still to cheer him in this wreck of life.
One treasure, source of soothing peace, remain'd:
In this he deems all happiness regain'd;
A friend, a cottage, and a faithful wife.
"O gracious Heaven! but deign these blessings spare,
"Spare me but these!" was now his only prayer.
No other wish his happy spirit knew—
Heav'n heard—ten years like one too swiftly flew,
Then o'er their tomb he bow'd an image of despair!

XIX.

Three sons, fair thriving in life's vernal bloom,
The image of his youth, and hope of age,
Are swept away by pestilential rage,
And grief soon lays their mother in the tomb.
Who now is left that sighs his sigh to hear,
Who, when he weeps, consoles with answ'ring tear?
For, ah! his only friend, he too is gone!
Bereft of all he lov'd, he pines alone;
Lone, in a stranger world, bow'd down with wo severe!

XX.

He stops upon the desolated spot,
A lone and leafless tree mid stormy gales:
The fountain of his joy for ever fails—
How insupportable the friendless cot
Where happiness once fix'd her chosen place!
What is the world? a vast and vacant space
For fortune's wheel to roll around at will!
His last lov'd prop now gone, why linger still?
His sole sad wish a grave, to end his weary race.

XXI.

Within this void inhospitable seat
Alphonso flew with wo-bewilder'd mind:
And found, what grief had never hop'd to find,
Peace and content as lingering years retreat.
Though worldlings from the wretch had basely flown
One who Alphonso's prosperous days had known,
An old domestick, faithful to his lord,
Cleaves to his side in grief without reward—
And here their sole retreat, the rude o'erhanging stone.

XXII.

And by degrees he struggled thro' the flood
That nigh o'erwhelm'd his soul in hopeless death—
Peace, stillness, temperance, zephyr's balmy breath,
His mind unclouded, purified his blood,
And bad new hope a gleam of joy restore.
And now he felt from heaven's exhaustless store
That e'en for wounds like his a balsam flow'd:
Felt, when the magick of a sun-beam glow'd,
That nature's charms had pow'r to sooth his soul once more.

XXIII.

And when at last this paradise he saw,
By some kind genius fenc'd with rocks around,
As if for him a consecrated ground,
He feels affliction from his soul withdraw:
He feels his spirit glowing with delight,
Rous'd from the tortures of a fev'rous night,
Soar to the twilight of eternal'day—
"Here rest," he cries, "this paradise survey,
"Rest, where no worldly grief our souls shall rudely smite!"

XXIV.

Thus in enjoyment, and alternate toil,
He the late harvest of his life consum'd,
And till'd his little spot, where ever bloom'd
Luxuriant plenty from the grateful soil—
Labour was pleasure, labour sweeten'd rest:
Lost to the world, its miseries seem'd at best
A childish dream, whene'er he turn'd to trace
The wretched earnings of his earthly race:
Thus conscience, health, and peace, his spirit daily blest.

XXV.

Now, bow'd with years, his lov'd companion died—
Alone remain'd the hermit, yet the more
His spirit turn'd to that celestial shore,
Where all he lov'd did with their God reside—
There dwelt his soul—a wandering stranger here—
Mid the still night when objects disappear,
And bodies, as external senses die,
In their first nothing seem again to lie,
Oft on his cheek he felt a breathing spirit near.

XXVI.

Then his half-slumbering ears in trance perceive,
With shuddering rapture heard, the groves among,
Angelic harmonies at distance sung,
For him the inexpressive chorus weave:
And as he lists he feels earth's slender wall,
That parts him from his friends, about to fall:
His spirit swells, a flame celestial bright
Burns in his breast, while rob'd in heavenly light
Shapes of the viewless world his soul responsive call.

XXVII.

These yet remain, when softly laid in sleep
His eyelids close, and in the morning rays
When the wide world its theatre displays,
Still o'er his sense the warbled echos sweep;
A soul-felt glance of heavenly joy supreme
Gilds all around, the groves and mountains gleam;
And, over all, he sees the form divine,
The Uncreated in his creatures shine,
Bright as in drops of dew the sun's reflected beam.

XXVIII.

Thus imperceptibly did heaven and earth
United in his soul together run:
His spirit brightens like an inward sun:
Far from the dissonance of mortal birth,
From passion's turmoil, in this holy gloom
Joys that await the blest his soul illume.
Who locks my daring lip with viewless seal,
Lest aught ineffable its warmth reveal?
Mute o'er th' abyss I bend—man dares no more presume.

XXIX.

Such was the pious man, before whose feet
Amanda sinks with filial fond delight:
And he, unwonted to the cheering sight,
Which oft his heart in secret sigh'd to meet,
With long-forgotten joys that life renew,
Welcomes this soul-felt unexpected view:
And as he clasps her hand with parent zeal,
And folds the youth with warmth that fathers feel,
Looks speechless thanks to Him who there the wanderers drew.

XXX.

And leads them to his place of calm repose,
Leads to his garden bow'rs, his crystal stream,
Groves where ripe fruit, and purple clusters gleam,
And all his treasures on his guests bestows—
" Nature," he says, " my children, covets less
" Than man conceives: ye here enough possess—
" Realms cannot sate whom little fails to please:
" Long as your trials last here live at ease,
" Share all that nature claims, and want's keen sigh
suppress."

XXXI.

He spoke: for plain at first their aspect show'd,
The truth as yet by Huon unreveal'd—
Though stern affliction had their features seal'd,
Both in their air and manner bore confest,
Grandeur by ceaseless sorrow undeprest:
A worth unvarying with the transient hour,
Worth unallay'd by fate's debasing pow'r,
By inborn virtue stampt, the treasure of the breast.

XXXII.

Thrice had the sun renew'd his golden light,
Since in the lap of paradise they lay:
Nor can they chase the pleasing thought away,
That the good hermit, such indeed in sight,
Is some kind genius whose protecting grace
Consoles their sorrow in this lonely place:
Perchance 'tis Oberon, who, kind at last,
Now every trial (so they think) o'erpast,
Will with reviving love his friends once more embrace.

XXXIII.

But by degrees the sweet illusion flies,
And with it vanishes, O heavy grief!
The transient hope that gave awhile relief:
And now their souls with still-increasing ties
Around his kindred heart more closely twin'd.
Ah! from a heart so warm, a soul so kind,
In sympathy so tender, pure in zeal,
Ah! can his friends a thought, a wish conceal,
Or shed unpity'd tears to silent wo resign'd.

XXXIV.

In boundless confidence the grateful youth,
While warmer feelings burnt within his breast,
The more his host each anxious wish supprest,
Unbosoms all his soul with artless truth;
His rank, his name, each peril that ensued
Since the sad combat in the fatal wood,
When hasty rage reveng'd base Scharlot's deed:
How that the emperour had his death decreed,
And how by fairy aid his hand had all subdu'd.

XXXV.

How love did in a dream at first descend,
And with a look enchain him to his bride:
From Bagdad how he 'scap'd, a god his guide,
And, ah! the warning of his fairy friend!
How, when resistless passion once prevail'd,
And he, frail mortal! sunk, by love assail'd,
All nature seem'd that instant to conspire,
Heap'd on his head intolerable ire;
And how all fairy aid sithence had ever fail'd!

XXXVI.

" Blest," says the hermit, " blest the man, whom fate
" Guides with strict hand, but not unfriendly aim!
" How blest! whose slightest fault is doom'd to shame.
" Him, trained to virtue, purest joys await—
" Earth's purest joys reward each trying pain!
" Think not the fairy will for aye remain
" Inexorable foe to hearts like thine:
" Still o'er you hangs his viewless hand divine:
" Do but deserve his grace, and ye his grace obtain."—

XXXVII.

' And how deserve it? how forgiveness gain?'
With lip of fire impatient Huon cries—
' Lo! I am ready—speak! thy son advise—
' What can I do?'—" Ah! willingly abstain,
Alphonso says; " be there repentance shown:
" Son! by self-punishment thy guilt atone!"
Pale Huon thrills at every word he speaks—
" I feel it, says the sire, with glowing cheeks,
" But what high virtue claims, thy heart shall ne'er
disown."

XXXVIII.

Firm self-conviction fires th' exalted youth:
'There is my hand!'—no other word they spoke:
And truly blest was he who never broke
The vow he swore, but held his plighted truth
More than an hundred weeks alone self-rein'd—
The noblest victory Huon ever gain'd.
Yet now and then the hermit drawing near,
Wakes on his glowing cheek a wholesome fear,
And Rezia's stedfast mind at times his wish restrain'd.

XXXIX.

"Labour maintains each sense," the hermit says,
"In peace with duty, toil and ceaseless work
"Clear the foul dregs which in the body lurk:
"And what allures from virtue's rightful ways
"Like indolence, that feeds th' unholy dream?—
"Wake with the day—prevent the sunny beam—
"Go forth where health and exercise conspire;
"Mid yon deep grove thy limbs by labour tire,
"And fell the groaning wood till twilight's shadowy gleam."

XL.

And for Amanda's hut to form a roof,
With moss and loam the walls impervious frame,
And for the chimney's swift-devouring flame,
And for the craving hearth to pile aloof
The wintry store, where load on load, combine
Billets of cloven fir and unctuous pine:
These, and a thousand things by Huon done
Between the dawn of day and setting sun,
To soothing sleep at night his weary limbs resign.

XLI.

Hands to rude toil unus'd but ill succeed;
Tedious at first the sylvan axe to wield
For knightly falchion and emblazon'd shield;
A hind accustom'd to the servile deed,
The task in half the time had better wrought—
The knight excels, by daily trial taught;
And if at times his limbs and courage tire,
Amanda's image fans the drooping fire,
Strengthens his weary frame, and cheers desponding thought.

XLII.

While Huon daily labours in the wood,
The hermit, in whose footstep scarce appears
The still-increasing load of fourscore years,
Yields not to sloth, nor sinks by age subdued.
Near his lov'd hermitage the holy sire
When smiles the sun, with ever new desire
Drinks the pure spirit of the balmy air,
And prunes the o'erloaded branch: meanwhile, the fair
Prepares their evening meal, and trims the cheerful fire.

XLIII.

Here might be seen, (though from th' etherial seat
If angels, hovering o'er this hallow'd place,
View not in Rezia's charms a kindred grace,
No other eye beholds the still retreat,)
The caliph's child with tranquil smile serene,
While scarce a sorrow clouds her lovely mien,
Bow'd to low cares as one to labour born—
New duties, quickly learnt, the fair adorn,
And a new nameless grace in all exalts the queen.

XLIV.

She, too, unmindful of her tender charms,
Oft from the rill that near the cottage flows,
Draws the pure stream, and fears not to expose
The glossy polish of her swan-like arms—
Ah! if one smile the toilsome duty bless,
Ah! if from ills that most the poor oppress,
She free her honour'd sire, and virtuous lord,
This glorious recompense, this great reward,
Exalts each menial task, and dignifies distress.

XLV.

And when the holy man (a saint of heaven)
Comes homeward from his garden, lov'd employ,
And blesses her, how pure her boundless joy:
Soul-felt, more priz'd than treasures tenfold given,
Whate'er proud Bagdad's golden walls display'd—
How pure! pale twilight stealing o'er the glade,
When round their hearth the cheerful guests unite;
And from the flame a soft reflected light
Plays o'er Amanda's charms, half hid in floating shade.

XLVI.

Then on those charms while Huon dares repose
Looks that imparadise his ravish'd soul,
Down his dark cheek still tears of rapture roll,
And not an earth-born wish impurely glows:
He sees an angel of the heavenly choir
Who comes to sooth his wo, and hope inspire—
Enough for him, above all mortals blest,
To dare to love her, and to view, express
In every chasten'd look, a gleam of fond desire.

XLVII.

And oft between them plac'd the father sits,
And to his wistful guests in lively strain,
(While scenes long past, in memory rise again,)
Through half the swift-wing'd nights, relates by fits
Some bold transaction of his days of yore:
And as they glow th' eventful story o'er,
Warm'd by their fire his spirit warmly glows;
Swift through his veins the life-blood freshly flows,
Tale after tale runs on, and youth returns once more.

XLVIII.

And oft the ghost of gloominess to lay,
That broods on owlet wing mid snowy clouds,
When silent meadows weep in misty shrouds,
The hero to some merry roundelay
Wakes up his lute, that wandering late he found,
Long time unus'd, untun'd, with chords half-bound:
Yet Orpheus' spirit seems to touch the wire,
And with the soul of melody inspire,
When lov'd Amanda's voice completes th' imperfect sound.

XLIX.

And oft entic'd by winter's scenery bright,
When ocean smok'd from far with icy cold,
And all the rocks were veil'd in snowy fold,
Then as at even-tide the lingering light
Hung on the mountain brow, in purple died;
New beauties lur'd them from their chimney-side,
To bathe in æther's blue translucent flood—
How brac'd their limbs! how purified their blood!
New life, new soul they glow'd, all sorrow cast aside.

L.

Thus imperceptibly the winter past—
And now awakening from her long repose,
Spring o'er the lap of earth gay verdure throws:
No more the forest bows before the blast,
A naked wreck—but where the pillars stand
Of arch'd embow'ring roofs that shade the land,
And nature's temple tow'rs sublime in air,
The pomp of foliage thickens full and fair,
And clustering leaves on leaves, religious gloom expand.

LI.

The earth is deck'd anew with flow'ry bloom,
Fair budding smile the garden, grove, and plain,
Charm'd echo swells the birds melodious strain,
And rocks are wreath'd with plants that breathe perfume.
From bubbling rills again clear currents stray
Down the green moss, and wind their silver way:
And through the night, from time to time renew'd,
The lonely bird amid the thickening wood
Trills to the silent moon her melancholy lay.

LII.

Rezia, whose time now ever nearer draws,
Seeks pathless solitudes, and deep alcoves,
Where branches thickly arch'd o'ershade the groves:
There loves to lean in still and solemn pause,
And mark with trembling joy the vernal strife,
The motion, murmur, universal life,
That teem around—in prescient rapture prest,
Clasps a sweet child in spirit to her breast—
New tie, that tenfold binds the husband and the wife.

LIII.

Clasps a sweet infant, whom maternal love
Gifts, ere the time, with every winning grace;
Bids her new hopes, and soft affections trace
That ever circling round that centre move;
Note the first smile of infantine delight,
Smiles that at once the pangs of death requite,
Born for her babe with willing patience mild.
Now views the father's features in the child,
Which softening into hers, unfold before her sight.

LIV.

But gradually th' enchanting dream subsides,
By shudd'ring apprehensions overpower'd,
And pangs, which still in solitude devour'd,
She feign would hide, but scarce from Huon hides:
And oft she thinks, and meek to heaven uprears
Her eye that swims with uncomplaining tears—
"Might but my Fatma sooth me in distress!"—
Peace! Rezia! peace! though woes around thee press,
Fate, that still guides thy course, shall sooth these bitter fears.

LV.

Fate has prepar'd the way—the elfine queen
Since that detested hour, when sullen spite
Had robb'd her bosom of its sole delight,
Fed on lone grief in this sequester'd scene.
Alas! with Oberon, who rashly swore
That dreadful oath, which none, who heav'n adore,
Who breathe beneath the canopy of light,
No, not the world of spirits dares to slight—
With Oberon, her peace is fled for evermore!

LVI.

Too late, Titania mourns the hasty deed,
Fruit of one witless moment!—On her cheeks
Accusing guilt in burning blushes speaks:
To dreadful treason, dreadful pangs succeed,
Treason against herself, and wedded lord.
In vain stern pride yet struggles—self-abhorr'd,
Her spirit yields to tenderness alone.
Far as the heavens the penitent had flown,
And pardon at his feet with bitter tears implor'd.

LVII.

Ah! how had that avail'd?—The monarch swore
Never in water, or in air, again,
Or flow'ry groves, whose branches balsam rain,
Or where in darkness, magick treasures o'er
The haggard griffin broods, his bride to meet—
He cannot with consoling pardon greet,
Bound by his oath in adamantine chains!—
To her no reconciling hope remains,
The sole sad hope yet left—avails it to repeat?

LVIII.

Avails it to repeat?—A loving pair,
Such as none is, none was, none e'er will be,
Alone can sooth stern fate's severe decree.
To hope for truth from Adam's sinful heir,
Truth unimpair'd by fortune's veering blast,
Truth, which in weal or wo, fix'd ever fast,
No soft seduction lures, no trials bend—
—Impossible!—Her tearful eyes descend
Down time's unfathom'd depth—thence, hopeless, shrink aghast!

LIX.

Loath'd are the fairy sports—she turns in scorn
From dances glittering to the moonlight ray:
Loath'd in her rosy robes the bloom of May:
No myrtle wreaths her drooping brow adorn;
The sight of pleasure opens every wound—
Through the vast void of air she flutters round,
Tost by the whirling tempest here and there,
And finds no rest, while sunk in deep despair.
She seeks some lonely spot, grief's consecrated ground.

LX.

Mid the wide circuit of the stormy deep
This lonely-tow'ring island strikes her sight,
Pil'd up with monstrous ruins height on height.
The gloomy clouds that round the desert sweep,
Lure her to steer amid the wild unknown
Her hov'ring flight—grief mark'd it for her own.
Downward she rushes in this dreary grave,
To mourn her being, and beneath the cave
Become, ah! would to heav'n! herself a senseless stone.

LXI.

And since Titania to these mountains fled,
Far from all joy, sev'n times by her unseen
Gay spring had cloth'd the earth in cheerful green—
As on an altar lies her stone-propt head,
Expecting death—The seasons flourish fair:
Days rise and set—deep shade, and sunny glare,
Chequer the rocks, in vain, with magick gleams—
—Though joy should o'er her pour a thousand streams,
Her soul in lonely gloom would brood o'er dead despair.

LXII.

One mournful thought, at times, with shadowy dream
Of consolation, seems to sweeten wo;
Perchance her Oberon feels alike the blow!
Perchance his tears from equal penance stream!
He loves her yet, no doubt—Ah! wo the day!
That he who loves her should her peace betray,
And be th' eternal murderer of his own!
How wretched! wretchedness till now unknown!
Ah! she would all forgive to chase such pangs away.

LXIII.

Yet since for every wound that racks the soul,
Time, best of soothers, o'er severest woes
Distils at last the balsam of repose:
Thus, o'er her misery, time assuasive stole,
And gradual lull'd the pang of ceaseless care—
She grieves, yet patient learns each grief to bear.
A ray, that darts the clouds of wo between,
Paints bright, at intervals, the distant scene.
Scenes, once all hopeless deem'd, now feed her day-dream fair.

LXIV.

Loath'd are the cliffs, and loath'd o'ershadowing height,
Where, prey of willing grief, she lonely lay—
Lo! at her wish, as sink the rocks away,
A new Elysium opens on her sight.
Lonely no more—three lovely sylphs appear
Swift at her call, rejoic'd her voice to hear,
Three sister sylphs, rejoic'd to bring relief,
Gaily they come to dissipate her grief,
And love, not duty, hastes to check the gushing tear.

LXV.

The paradise, which here the elfine queen
Form'd for herself, was, sure, the lonely place
That hid Alphonso in its lov'd embrace:
Unknown to him, the shelt'ring cliffs between
Stood the lov'd grotto, her sequester'd throne:
Whence, from the grove, by whispering night-winds blown,
Soft notes seraphick flow'd: and oft by night
O'er him at rest, she pois'd her viewless flight,
And breath'd upon his cheek pure airs to earth unknown.

LXVI.

And she had, anxious, mark'd the lovely pair
From day to day, since first the billows bore
The hapless exiles to this lonely shore;
And caught from time to time, to sooth her care,
A transient gleam of their mysterious state:
And oft, herself, at dawn and evening late,
Watch'd them in lonely solitude unseen:
Each look, each word persuades the fairy queen,
That on their doom depends her interwoven fate.

LXVII.

The more she views, the more warm hopes prevail,
Each day reviving joy fresh ardour gains—
If these are not the pair whom fate ordains,
Alas! if Huon and Amanda fail!
Illusive hope with them for ever dies.
She loves them as the light that cheers her eyes,
And guides with guardian vigilance their ways:
Resolv'd, unseen, with her assistant fays,
To sooth Amanda's wo when death-like pangs arise.

LXVIII.

The hour was come: opprest with silent wo,
Amanda, lingering, near the cottage strays,
Mid fragrant shrubs that shade her secret ways,
Where opening flow'rs around profusely blow,
And breathe fresh incense on the gale of morn.
Down a small path she wanders on forlorn;
Then stops before a grot, where ivy weaves
The rich luxuriance of thick clust'ring leaves,
While day's resplendent beams their glossy tint adorn.

LXIX.

Oft had Alphonso wish'd to view the grot,
And tried to enter the forbidden place:
And venturous Huon, oft intent to trace
The wonders of the strange mysterious spot,
Had tried in vain the secret to explore;
They stood with nameless terrour thrilling o'er,
And if they forward stept with daring force,
A strange resistance barr'd at once their course;
Against them seem'd to rise a vast yet viewless door.

LXX.

Their spirits sunk in deep mysterious gloom,—
Their steps retiring slid with noiseless tread;
And none again, so strong, so strange the drea
To tempt the horrours of the place presume—
If till that time untry'd, 'tis all unknown;
Enough, that now Amanda, fearless grown,
No longer can the bold attempt withstand:
Onward she calmly steps—with gentle hand
Removes the ivy web, and enters in alone.

LXXI.

At once, a secret shudder gently steals
Along her frame, upon a yielding seat
She sinks, where moss and blooming roses
Now inly feels, through bone and marrow
Thrill upon thrill swift-piercing anguish da
'Tis past—sweet languor steals upon the s
It seems, that o'er her eyes pale moon-be
Gradual, in deep and deeper shadow dy'd,
Till softly hush'd to sleep, oblivion stills

LXXII.

And from within her a confusion gleams
Of lovely shapes; some o'er her sweep, some roll'd,
Each in the other floating, fold on fold;
Mixture of wond'rous mood—and now it seems
Before her knees three lovely angels stand:
Clear to her gaze their mystick rites expand:
And, lo! a woman veil'd in roseate ray,
Holds to her lips, as dies her breath away,
A wreath of roses fresh that bud beneath her hand.

LXXIII.

For the last time her higher beating heart
Thrills with a short and softly-silenc'd pain—
The forms are fled away—she swoons again—
And now, without remembrance of a smart,
Wakes to soft notes, and seems afar to hear
Their low-lull'd echoes dying from the ear.
The sister forms are vanish'd from her view,
Alone before her, rob'd in roseate hue,
The gracious elfine queen soft-smiling deigns appear.

LXXIV.

Within her arms repos'd a new-born child:
She gives it to Amanda—then, as blown
At distance, in a wink away is flown:
Sweet odours breathe where late the fairy smil'd—
The dreamer opes her disenchanted eyes,
And darts her hand, while now the vision flies,
To catch the hem that gilds her robe of light—
In vain—the whole is vanish'd from her sight—
Her hand but grasps the air—Amanda lonely lies!

LXXV.

One pulse-beat more—and how divinely great
At once her mingled wonder and delight—
She feels, she sees, yet trusts nor sense nor sight,
She feels herself delivered from her weight,
While in her lap a quivering infant lies,
More beauteous than e'er blest a mother's eyes;
Fresh as a morning rose, and fair as love—
And, oh! what thrills her swelling bosom move,
While soft she feels her heart against him fondly rise

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

H. Fuseli R.A. pinx.

C. Warren sculp.

LXXVI.

She feels it—'tis her son!—with rapture wild,
Bath'd in warm tears from sweet sensations prest,
She clasps him to her cheek, her mouth, her breast,
And looks with eye unsated on her child.
He knows her, sure—sure answering rapture his,
Leave her at least the visionary bliss!
Lo! his clear eye to her's responsive speaks,
And lo! his little mouth that wistful seeks
Warm from her lip to suck the sweet o'erflowing kiss.

LXXVII.

She hears the silent call—how quickly hears
A mother's heart! and follows it untaught,
With such delight, such soul-transporting thought,
That, sure, if angels bending from their spheres
Could gaze on earthly scenes with envious eyes,
Envy, at such a sight, had reach'd the skies.
She lays the lovely suckling on her breast,
While tenderest sympathy, supremely blest,
Feels in her heart new springs of purest transport rise.

LXXVIII.

Meanwhile with ceaseless search the groves around,
Huon, two livelong hours had sought his bride!
But all in vain—his eye no trace descried:
As last he wanders to this holy ground:
He ventures near and nearer to the spot,
Tries, unresisted, the forbidden grot—
Oh! heart-felt rapture! how supremely blest!
Amanda with an infant at her breast,
Sunk in a flood of bliss, all else on earth forgot.

LXXIX.

Ye, whom kind nature gifted at your birth
With that possession which outweighs all joys,
That endless treasure which no time destroys,
Not to be bought with all the wealth on earth;
Which in this world of sin to God recalls,
And in another where no sin enthralls,
Follows our heavenly being unconfin'd,
Gift of a feeling heart, and virtuous mind!
Look, and behold that sight!—the holy curtain fails—

OBERON.

CANTO IX.

I.

But now forsaken Fatma claims our care—
Ah! when her lovely charge the waves among,
Plung'd, with infolding arms round Huon flung,
Poor Fatma—day and night in deep despair,
Ceaseless ceas'd with unabated moan
To weep Amanda's misery, and her own—
In vain she cries, she shrieks, she rends her hair,
All with a breath is vanish'd into air:
All with a breath away hope's baseless fabrick flown.

II.

Ah! what her fate? in sorrow unconsol'd,
Mid the rude offspring of the boist'rous flood,
Who laugh to scorn her melancholy mood,
And with wild eyes in drunken passion roll'd,
Already swallow their defenceless prey—
What can the horrours of her doom allay?
Indignant blasts that long and loudly rave,
The shrieking damsel from their fury save,
And drive the staggering ship o'er ocean's stormy way.

III.

As droop the crew with speechless fear aghast,
The pinnace reels where'er the tempests blow,
Now west, now south, still drifting to and fro—
The demon of the air that rode the blast
Now curbs his rage—scarce rescu'd from the grave
And safe at Tunis from the stormy wave,
The captain, careless of the maiden's wo,
Turns to his profit fate's malignant blow,
And sells, without remorse, poor Fatma as a slave.

IV.

Fatma, who scarce the five and thirtieth time
Had seen fair May her blooming robe unfold,
Was not a flow'ret mid that tribe inroll'd
Whose lustre passes with their vernal prime.
No, of that hardy stock her growth appears,
That still sustains unchang'd the waste of years;
That hardy stock where pleasure loves to trace
Fire in the eye, and many a dimpling grace,
That still, when youth decays, with lasting beauty cheers.

V.

Just at that time the sultan's gard'ner came,
Came to the place, by lucky fortune brought,
Where for a trifle might be lightly bought
This precious ware—he views, he likes the dame;
Thus he deems her worth beyond the price,
Disdains to ask his hoary head advice.
His gulistan has all but this sweet rose—
The gold is quickly weigh'd—poor Fatma goes—
And that she cannot change, to bear with patience tries.

VI.

Meanwhile, a wind from fav'ring heav'n extends
Reluctant Sherasmin's unshifting sails.
No sooner is he landed at Marseilles,
Than swift, as one whose life on flight depends,
Forward to Paris is the courier sped—
Mounts the near hill, and, while before him spread
At dawn, the city strikes his ravish'd eyes,
Where all in peaceful slumber stilly lies;
Poor wight! distracting thoughts confuse his luckless head.

VII.

"Halt!" says his spirit to him, "hold, my son!
"And ere we further trot, bethink thee well,
"What thou design'st—and let me freely tell,
"That thy impatience has thy wits outrun,
"Or thou hadst long ere this the danger weigh'd—
"True—when at Askalon fair breezes play'd,
"They left thee, for reflection, little pause—
"Yet if we fairly, friend! discuss the cause,
"There thou hadst wisely stopp'd, by cautious fear delay'd.

VIII.

" Far, between you and me, 'tis clear as light,
" This embassy is void of common sense:
" It doubly sharpens every old offence,
" And swells the emperour's rage to boundless height.
" Shame 'twere to hurt this casket, after all—
" Come, for its precious sake thy wits recall!
" This handful of goats hair, these grinders too,
" Heaven knows from whose old jaws—it will not do—
" Your excellence! I fear, it must but ill befall!

IX.

" Yes, if the knight himself, with princely state,
" Horsemen caparison'd in sumptuous pride,
" And with the caliph's daughter by his side,
" Should proudly stalk, harangue with flow'ry prate,
" Bows out of number, and each fit grimace
" That suits knight, duke, and peer, in courtly place,
" Were beard and teeth on crimson velvet laid,
" Where golden tassels at each corner play'd,
" Ingram 'twere wisely done—success might crown
our case.

X.

" Then comes the pomp of entry, solemn show,
" The sun-like radiance of the Eastern bride,
" That gilds the proud procession far and wide —
" String each by each together in a row;
" These things have weight, and all runs smoothly round:
" The emperour cannot veer, by justice bound—
" There are the proofs—he handles, sees all right;
" The knight has kept his promise like a knight,
" None dare his claim withstand, by honour nobly crown'd.

XI.

" But these divided, piecemeal fall away:
" If thy wise skull (alas! I sorely fear!)
" Is not more wise than his who sent thee here"—
' Well then, what counsel? shall I go, or stay?
' What's to be done?'—" At all events 'twere best
" To slide away, the casket in thy breast,
" Ere any one remarks it—ride full trot,
" Straight to the Lateran, that holy spot,
" Where, chance, ere this, the knight enjoys untroubled rest."

XII.

Thus to the 'squire his better genius spake:
And when maturely pondering o'er and o'er,
His cautious brain no better counsel bore,
He wisely thinks it best the hint to take.
Soon as resolv'd, his fiery spirit burns,
To the good town his shoulder blade he turns;
And spurring to rejoin at Rome the knight,
Crosses the Alps, nor rests his breathless flight,
Till his impatient eye the wish'd-for goal discerns.

XIII.

And now with keen solicitude he tires
The faithful Swiss, that guard the sacred door:
Searches each antichamber o'er and o'er,
And with unwearied tongue in vain enquires.
No news of Huon can the wretch obtain.
He flies from house to house, from fane to fane,
From hospital to hospital around.
Paints him from head to foot—no Huon found—
And then renews his search, but ah! renews in vain.

XIV.

For six long weeks poor Sherasmin remains
Chain'd by delusive hopes that never cease:
Nor rests himself, nor others leaves in peace.
Still searching o'er and o'er with fruitless pa[illegible]
But, since no waiting profits, in despair
The wretch begins the Basque's great oath to swear:
And as he turn'd away his hopeless view,
Vows with loud voice, as sure as heaven is blue,
In pilgrim garb to seek lov'd Segewin's princely heir.

XV.

His money spent, his misery unconsol'd,
Shall he one jewel from the casket take,
Which for the fairy king, the donor's sake,
Is worth, in Huon's view, an hundred fold?
No—he would flay for bread his barter'd hide,
Ere purchase banquets, by such means supplied.
From pilgrim poor none gold or silver seek,
He, with a muscle-shell, and blessing meek,
Pays half the world, and finds a friend on every side.

XVI.

So, to and fro for two whole years and more,
The faithful Sherasmin in pilgrim vest
Begs through the world, nor yields to transient rest,
Still bound from port to port, from shore to shore—
Yet with vain labour searches here and there
For valiant Huon, and Amanda fair!
At last, as lucky stars his footsteps guide,
Or secret instinct that new hope supply'd,
At Tunis he arrives half dead with toil and care.

XVII.

And at the gard'ner's door the old man laid,
His head reposes on a bank of stone,
Poor wretch! with famine and fatigue o'erdone,
To rest awhile in the refreshing shade:
A female slave with bread and wine appears,
And to his lip the strengthening chalice rears:
But when they view each other face to face,
With fear and mingled joy the friends embrace,
And on each other's neck shed sadly-pleasing tears.

XVIII.

" Ah! art thou Fatma?" on her tearful cheek,
" Is 't possible?" the joyful pilgrim cries—
" No, not in dreams such hope e'er blest my eyes—
" Is 't possible?—Unfold this mystery—speak!
" Meet we at Tunis? On this distant land?
" What storm has blown thee to this heathen strand?
" Where are they—Huon and Amanda, where?"—
' Ah! Sherasmin!' sobs Fatma, in despair,
' They are!—wretch!—ask me not'—and weeps, and
wrings her hand.

XIX.

" What say'st thou?—God forbid—say, Fatma, say
" What are they?—speak!"—' Ah! Sherasmin! they
are'—
Her faltering lip scarce stammer'd out, ' they are,'
When heart-felt anguish took her speech away—
" O Heaven!" cries Sherasmin, and like a child
Sobs upon Fatma's neck, with misery wild—
" While on their cheek fair youth and beauty bloom'd!
" Too hard!—alas! I little good presum'd!—
" Too hard the proof for blood by Adam's stain defil'd!"

XX.

Soon as the tender soul recovers breath,
She, piece by piece, continues to relate
From first to last the tale of bitter fate;
All that had happen'd in that night of death,
When ocean roar'd, and howl'd th' infuriate gale,
While Rezia seen by gleams of lightning pale,
Amid the crew that round her Huon prest,
Impetuous rush'd, and clasping breast to breast,
Plung'd mid the stormy waves—oh! wondrous woful
tale!

XXI.

And thus a livelong hour the mourners staid
To feast their souls with never-sated wo;
And both extol with friendship's ardent glow,
The fairest, bravest pair God ever made
This nether world to perfect and adorn—
" An angel like to her" (she cries forlorn)
" This mournful eye shall ne'er behold again!"—
' Nor I,' he answers, in congenial strain,
' A prince, like Segewin's son—brave man! for glory
born!'

XXII.

And when he thrice had heard repeated o'er
The melancholy tale, a feeble light
Of distant hope gleams cheerful on his sight—
Yet, yet they may be sav'd!—be blest once more!—
And, as he ponders o'er and o'er again,
Still less the dire suspicion racks his brain,
That the kind fairy will desert his friends:
He, who so oft had sav'd, some plan intends:
His thoughts, to man unknown, a wise design ordain.

XXIII.

And by that spark of hope, which feebly glows
Like rays that from afar at midnight dart,
He vows from Fatma never to depart,
But pair'd with her by sympathetic woes,
Await th' unravelling of the web of fate,
At Tunis, be the issue soon or late.
Thus fixt, his staff and mantle, by her aid,
He barters for a jacket, and a spade,
And in the garden works each day in hireling state.

XXIV.

While tender Fatma, and the faithful 'squire
With tears the blooming gardens daily tend,
Like the lov'd grave of a departed friend,
Spring thrice renews her gay and green attire,
Yet sad to Huon's eyes, that still behold,
Year after year in dull inaction roll'd,
In this lone isle, this peaceful painful scene:
He cannot from the world his spirit wean,
Where gleaming from afar fame waves her banner bold.

XXV.

And Huonet, on whom so sweet imprest,
Amanda's charms, and Huon's strength unite,
The fairest infant, most enchanting sight,
That ever hung at a celestial breast,
For other labours born, than forth to fare
With sylvan axe, embitters Huon's care:
And thou, O Rezia! oft thy angel nigh
At midnight sees thee raise thy sleepless eye,
And hears thee stilly breathe a meek yet mournful pray'r.

XXVI.

Yes, ye both feel it, in youth's golden year
That nature bids ye not your bliss divide:
Ye feel that nobler ends should action guide:
Here lost, ye miss the heroick high career
Where boundless virtue spreads her wide control.
In vain the hidden tears that stilly roll
Are shed at distance from the hermit's gaze,
Experience to his heart the truth betrays:
The smile deceives him not, he reads their inmost soul.

XXVII.

His mind, heav'n-raised, that earth's vain grandeur scorns,
Deigns for their sake the worldly scenes retrace,
Pomp, pleasures, honours, that their birth-right grace,
And owns they lose what envy'd life adorns:
So lives he in their life, their feelings feels,
Nor blames the natural tear that each conceals,
In awe of him—nor blames their mutual love:
But while stern fates with bitter trials prove,
Consoles their present wo, and future bliss reveals.

XXVIII.

Once, when their labour o'er, at close of day,
All three, (Amanda with her lovely child,)
To view where rob'd in cloudless glory smil'd
Th' expanse of heaven, along whose spangled way
Millions of brilliant orbs the night array'd,
Sat on the brow that crown'd the star-light glade:
While still from world to world with awe-struck mind
Absorb'd in silent wonder unconfin'd,
They look'd mute thanks to Him who all from nothing made:

XXIX.

At that still hour, the venerable man
With voice that breath'd religious awe serene,
Spoke of this earthly life, fleet shadowy scene,
And mark'd that state where real life began,
When o'er the world the soaring spirit flies:
It seem'd as if a breath from opening skies
Soft drew him upward to his heavenly goal:
From Rezia's eye the tear in silence stole:
Half vanish'd from her sight he seems in air to rise.

XXX.

" Yes," he continues, " now from yonder shore,
" Lo! now, celestial hands to me extend!
" Soon will this dream of swift existence end:
" I soon shall rest, all earthly trials o'er.
" Your course begins—and joy and wo await,
" (Joys that new brace the soul for adverse fate,)
" As onward glides life's changeful fleet career—
" Swift as a dream their traces disappear:
" And nought of earthly scenes attend your future state.

XXXI.

" Nought but the treasure stor'd within your heart
" Of truth and charity, and inward joys,
" And that remembrance which no time destroys,
" That weal or wo ne'er crew you once apart
" From paths where duty leads, unerring guide!"—
Thus spoke the sire—their souls alone replied:
And when at last they went to late repose,
More warm he prest them, and at parting, rose,
Swift as he turn'd away, the tear he strove to hide.

XXXII.

That very night, while dark presages swell
Her breast with woes to come, the fairy queen
Lifts her sad eye to heaven's foreboding scene.
From her pale cheek the withering roses fell,
While bath'd in tears she stood, and saw, and read.
She calls her elves with mournful accent dread,
To view what ills malignant fates design,
And how in aspect dire the stars combine,
That o'er Amanda's brow their baleful influence shed.

XXXIII.

Then quickly flying to the fragrant bed,
Where veil'd beneath the almond's flowery spray,
The caliph's daughter with her infant lay,
Rous'd by dire dreams from boding terrour bred:
With rosy branch Titania softly swept
Her half-shut eyes, that frequent woke and wept:
And while she sunk at once in peaceful rest,
And calm oblivion still'd her beating breast,
Stole the unconscious boy, who sweetly smiling slept.

XXXIV.

Then back she hastens with the beauteous prey,
And to her graces speaks—" Ye now behold
" That baleful planet o'er Amanda roll'd;
" Haste! to my fav'rite bow'r this babe convey:
" There tend him as my new-born only son:
" So may this child the threaten'd danger shun."
Then from the roses that her chaplet grace,
Gives a fresh bud to each attendant grace—
" Oh haste! the twilight dawns—prevent the rising sun!

XXXV.

" Observe my will, and every day and hour
" Look at your blooming buds, and when ye view
" Their roseate splendour chang'd to lily hue,
" O then! once more love's reconciling pow'r
" New-binds me to my lord—then speed your flight,
" Greet with Amanda's son our nuptial rite—
" Amanda's misery vanishes with mine."—
Th' obedient nymphs their graceful necks incline,
And on a fleecy cloud are wafted from her sight.

XXXVI.

Scarce through the roseate heaven Aurora peeps,
Than with foreboding sad, and strange alarms,
Amanda hastens to her Huon's arms,
Who far from her, and from Alphonso sleeps:
In dread impatience hurrying from her grot,
The hapless mother in her haste forgot
Round her lov'd boy to clasp her guardian arms,
And print a kiss on his unfolding charms;
Secure, she thinks, he sleeps, and angels guard the spot.

XXXVII.

She comes—pale Huon meets her—neither speak,
Both inly boding with the same intent
Hiding the fears that spoke some dread event,
The hermit's hallow'd cell in silence seek—
How throbb'd their heart with unaccustom'd fear,
Mute as they come his noiseless cavern near!
Breathless he lies, his hands across his heart,
A deadly paleness marks each mortal part,
Yet, on each feature peace and heav'n-seal'd hope appear.

XXXVIII.

"Hush! he but sleeps," Amanda softly says,
And on his hand her hand so lightly prest,
As if she fear'd to interrupt his rest:
But when his clay-cold flesh no life displays,
And still his heart, and sunk his bloodless veins,
On his pale corse with agonizing pains
At once she sinks—the tears that bathe his cheek,
Her soul's unutterable anguish speak—
"Ah! father! thou art gone! no hope on earth remains!"

XXXIX.

Then up she starts, and sinks on Huon's breast:
Both on their knees before the mortal shrine
That held so long the purest soul divine,
By awful silence solemn wo exprest;
And satiate sad the bitter sweet desire
To weep; and oft resolving to retire,
Press the last debt of love upon his hand;
Yet o'er his form, as fixt by magick, stand,
And thrill with pangs unknown, and woes that never tire.

OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

Fuseli R.A. pinxit. R. H. Cromek sc.

Published March 1st 1806, by Cadell & Davies, Strand.

XL.

It seems, that in his features they behold
The twilight dawn of new existence beam,
And that from heaven a bright reflected gleam
Round his pale brow its living lustre roll'd;
Rays of supernal light already shine
That change the mortal substance to divine,
And a scarce visible celestial smile
Play'd hovering o'er his lips, that seem'd the while
In a last blessing clos'd, his spirit to resign.

XLI.

" Feel'st thou not too," says Huon, as entranc'd
He upward looks, " as if a ray of light
" Fell on thy soul from yon celestial height?
" So never did I feel frail nature rais'd:
" So never did this transitory state,
" Where virtue stands the shock of ruthless fate,
" Seem like a gloomy pass to yonder skies:
" So never did I feel my courage rise
" To soar to highest deeds on heavenly wings elate.

XLII.

" I never felt such strength, such keen desire,
" Each sacrifice to make, each proof sustain,
" And without murmur combat wo and pain:
" O bride! forewarn'd by our celestial sire,
" Though proof on proof our earthly course infest,
" They but advance the hour of heav'nly rest:
" New hope, new confidence shall brace our heart."
He speaks, and as at last they, loth, depart,
Fate's unexpected blow assails his fervent breast.

XLIII.

For, as they quit the cell, and hand in hand,
Advancing, at the threshold lift their eyes,
Heavens! what a scene of horrour and surprise!
Where are they exil'd, to what stranger land?
Vanish'd! entirely vanish'd grove and field;
All that their lov'd elysium wont to yield.
Once more they dare to steal a glance around:
How void! they stand like statues on the ground:
No trace, where'er they turn, the blissful spot reveal'd!

XLIV.

They hover o'er the brink of an abyss,
Surrounded, wheresoe'er they turn their sight,
With dreary mountains, height o'erhanging height:
How dire the contrast of remember'd bliss!
No green blade waves where late the garden bloom'd,
No leaf where Spring embowering groves illumin'd:
Where now the nightingale's melodious wood?
Rude cliffs alone, and crags in ruins stood,
Dark, desert, and deform'd, mid rocks on rocks entomb'd.

XLV.

To what new trial of unheard-of grief,
Does this dire scene of desolation lead?
"Ah!" they exclaim, and bitter tears proceed,
While sad they seek in vain from heaven relief—
"Spirit! who now enjoy'st eternal rest,
"Spring, for thy sake, the rocks in verdure drest:
"The land of Eden bloom'd for thee alone:
"To us, on thy account, the vision shown—
"Now fate pursues us here, by thee no longer blest!"

XLVI.

'Assist me, Heav'n! to stand the shock of fate,'
Amanda cries, and stills her heaving breast—
Alas! poor wretch! by misery opprest,
Bow'd as thou art beneath this bitter weight,
Affliction's keenest pangs are yet unknown!—
Swift to her child she wings her way alone,
So lately left, she thinks, in sweet repose:
Resolv'd with him to bear severest woes:
Her infant in her arms, to bear without a groan.

XLVII.

She speeds where late he slumber'd by her side;
And as with lightning pierc'd, in wild dismay
Reels back—the bed is void—the child away!
"How rush'd he forth? ah! where without a guide?
"Ah! her alone, his vagrant footstep sought:
"Yet far from her, perhaps, in peril brought!
"Ah! no—the sporti e boy their dwelling near,
(So thinks she floating wild 'twixt hope and fear)
"Now in the garden strays—sweet momentary
thought!"

XLVIII.

The garden!—'tis a rocky ruin wild—
She rushes out—with frantick misery raves,
Calls him by name—explores the hollow caves,
And seeks in every cleft her absent child.
Rous'd by her echoing shrieks the father flies,
And speaks that hope his tortur'd heart denies—
"Amid these winding rocks the infant strays,
"In heav'n-watch'd innocence securely plays;
"Soon will he sportive bound before thy gladden'd eyes."

XLIX.

Two livelong hours, alas! they search in vain:
Loud calling on his name, explore around,
Now sink beneath th' o'erhanging cliff profound,
Now up th' aërial summit slowly strain:
Through every bush and yawning fracture creep,
And downward dive 'mid gloomy caverns deep,
To find at least the infant's peaceful grave.
Alas! no trace—alone wild echos rave,
Resounding to their groans that ring from steep to steep.

L.

Most strange, they think it, that a little child
Should lose himself in this rude desert ground,
Where never beast of prey e'er prowl'd around,
Or savage man, than beast of prey more wild.
The thought, that heightens wo, some solace breeds—
From misery's gloomy depth faint hope proceeds—
No—he but wanders mid these wilds unknown,
Or tir'd with roaming slumbers on a stone,
While Heaven with angel dreams his infant fancy feeds.

LI.

And every rocky ridge is search'd anew,
And every crevice, every craggy side,
And bush and brake, that chance the boy may hide,
Is o'er and o'er explor'd with falcon view.
The sorrows of their soul their thoughts confuse,
While hope, howe'er improbable, renews
Their toilsome search along the distant bay:
There, mid high sands and reeds, the wanderers stray,
And each, where fancy leads, a separate way pursues.

LII.

Wrapt in deep wo as roams the lonely bride,
At once unusual sounds alarm her ear:
Doubtful she seems a human voice to hear;
But, as the murmurs soon as heard subside,
While from a rock that overshadowing hung
Her craggy path the mountain wilds among,
A tumbling torrent shakes its bed profound:
Surely, she thinks, wild echo form'd the sound,
Which seem'd to fancy's ear from human voices sprung.

LIII.

Amanda's soul no hov'ring danger fear'd,
Maternal agonies her bosom fill:
When as she winds around a rocky hill,
That near the water-fall its summit rear'd,
Alarm'd, she views at once a boist'rous band
Of swarthy sailors rushing o'er the land,
Intent, it seems, to intercept her way;
And in a little cove their galley lay,
Behind a reef of rocks, at anchor on the strand.

LIV.

They came to water at this desert place,
And to their boat the liquid burthen bore,
When, on a sudden, wandering on the shore,
They view with restless and disorder'd pace
A female figure of angelick mien,
More beauteous far than eye had ever seen:
At first they stood in motionless surprise,
On this bleak coast, which every pilot flies,
To see a goddess move like love's enchanting queen.

LV.

Oft beauty makes the sternest spirit mild,
And tigers lose their fierceness at her feet:
Yet in their breasts no throbs of pity beat.
Their souls more fierce than prowling monster wild,
Rate female beauty by one test alone,
Whether in flesh and blood, or sculptur'd stone,
Like any bale of goods at market price—
"This one (the captain says) will well suffice,
"Ten thousand ducats, lads! in this one prize our own!

LVI.

" Haste, lads! and seize your prey! a face so fair
" Is worth, at Tunis, many a precious bale.
" When nightingales like this his ear regale,
" Nor thanks nor money will the sultan spare.
" No captive, whom his harem nets enclose,
" Like this wild flutterer half such beauty shows.
" Almansaris, though form'd to give delight,
" Will stand unnotic'd in Almansor's sight—
" Haste, lads! and seize the prize that fav'ring chance bestows."

LVII.

While thus th' unfeeling wretch his crew addrest,
Amanda, for an instant, musing stands—
A scene so strange some prompt resolve demands.
If they are hostile, flight is vain at best:
Impossible to 'scape the foe so near—
But pray'r and confidence may win their ear—
" Yes, face to face, I speak to them as friends,
" As guardians hail, whom Heaven in pity sends;
" Perchance to us kind fates the welcome vessel steer."

LVIII.

Forward, with innocence that knew no fear,
Peace in her look serene, and steady pace,
She steps an angel to the corsair race.
But vain her winning pray'r to pirate ear:
Those moving tones which speak to every heart,
No tender touch to iron souls impart:
The pirate nods, his crew the sign obey;
At once they circle, seize, and drag their prey:
Down to the galley drag, for Tunis' crowded mart.

LIX.

Rous'd by her shrieks, and agonizing groans
That loudly echo'd from each mountain cave,
Down from the wood fierce Huon flies to save,
Mad vengeance roaring in his lion tones;
And when no more the copse that fring'd the bay
Conceal'd the scenes, while darting on their way,
He grasps a knotty club that near him lies,
And like a thunderbolt that rends the skies
Rushes amid the crew that drag their struggling prey.

LX.

To see with bleeding arms his lovely bride
Struggle in vain before his tortur'd sight,
Gives tenfold strength—he maddens in the fight—
Death flies, where'er he strikes, from side to side—
As bursts from Summer cloud the storm of hail,
His blows their shoulders and their backs assail:
To quell the ravishers no mortal came:
His eye streams lightning, and his nostrils flame:
Seven Moors already sink beneath his murderous flail!

LXI.

Astonishment and shame, and desp'rate rage,
Now from their grasp to lose their ravish'd prey,
By one, who dares a host, thus forc'd away,
Spur them at once with Huon to engage.
Long as our knight can wheel his arm around,
He, to the throng is still superiour found:
But when the foe's united strength prevails,
When falls his oaken club, resistance fails,
O'erpower'd the maniack raves, and madly bites the ground!

LXII.

With death-like shriek Amanda breathless falls,
She thinks her Huon murdered in her sight—
These drag her to the ship with grim delight:
The rest, while demon vengeance wildly calls,
Round Huon rave, and foam with savage ire;
"Death! instant death!" all roar with mad desire:
"Too mild for him the bloodiest death," they cry—
"No, let him live, in lingering pangs to die,
"And, tortur'd day by day, and inch by inch expire!"

LXIII.

Deep in the wood, at distance from the shore,
They drag their victim, that his loudest word
Pour'd on the desert air may pass unheard.
Then bind the wretch, and fasten o'er and o'er
Arm, leg, and neck, and shoulders, to a tree.
To heaven he looks in speechless agony,
O'ercome by wo's unutterable weight.
Thus he—the while with jocund shout elate,
The crew bear off their prey, and bound along the sea.

OBERON.

CANTO X.

I.

Now sinks the day, and gloomy steals the night:
(Ah! now no more, as once, in pure content,
Heart meeting heart, with friends and lovers spent;)
Gloomy she came, and from her clouded height
Her darkest covering o'er the island flung:
Where now, no more, awaken'd echo sung,
From solemn stillness rais'd, the lay of morn;
There, reft of all he loves, a wretch forlorn,
In patience stills his soul, by hopeless misery wrung!

II.

Titania hears him, wrapt in misty air,
From the far wood in long deep pauses sigh:
She sees the wretch in silent anguish die,
And weeps, and flies away in mute despair.
In vain warm sympathies her soul expand:
In vain she ventures near—a viewless hand
Still drives her back—yet, as she leaves the shore,
Her last long look that rolls the island o'er
Darts on a ring of gold that glitters on the sand.

III.

Reft from Amanda's hand, the ring unseen
Dropt as she struggled with the pirate train;
And as Titania seizes it again,
How beat the bosom of the fairy queen!
"Hail! talisman! by elf and spright ador'd!
"Soon shall our fate be full, to love restor'd
"We shall again our nuptial promise plight!
"This once united, shall again unite,
"And crown thee, O belov'd! once more my sov'reign lord!"

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Vol. II. Page VII.

H. Fuseli R.A. pinx.t

J. Heath sculp.t

Published March 1st 1806. by Cadell & Davies, Strand.

IV.

Meanwhile the crew, to hated life again
Amanda's fleeting spirit back recalls:
Before her feet the captain lowly falls,
And prays th' unheeding mourner to restrain
The piercing sighs and tears, that night and day
Down her wan cheek in ceaseless currents stray—
" Thank thy good stars! how kind beyond all thought!
" I, lucky instrument, their will have wrought:
" Pass some few transient hours, we bow beneath thy sway.

V.

" We bow thy slaves, thy orders to fulfil:
" Almansor, grac'd himself with charms like thine,
" Alone is worthy of that form divine.
" Thy beauty, fairest maid! shall mould his will;
" Thou, too, with mutual joy the king wilt hail,
" And list, delighted, to his tender tale."—
He speaks: and to remove suspicious fear,
All that might rouse the sense of wo severe,
To shroud her charms from sight presents a gorgeous veil.

VI.

" He dies!" his fiery lips aloud exclaim,
Destruction in his air, and thundering sound!
" He dies! this arm shall fell him to the ground,
" Who dares with ruffian hand, and impious aim
" To violate this consecrated veil!
" Slaves! for your lives let none due homage fail:
" This destin'd jewel shall Almansor grace:
" Let no rash foot profane this hallow'd place."
Then leaves her, bowing low, with servile visage pale.

VII.

Rezia, who heard not what the pirate said,
Mute, motionless, her soul by misery rent,
Her lifeless hand before her forehead bent,
Rests on her knee-propt arm her drooping head:
With fixt and tearless eye, with bloodless cheek,
And pangs beyond the pow'r of grief to speak,
Her noble heart too weak to bear the wo.
She bears it not, but sinks beneath the blow:
Sinks, yet without complaint, in hopeless patience meek.

VIII.

She looks around for help: none, none to save!
But void, but hopeless, but substantial night,
Dark as her soul is all that meets her sight:
The world is chang'd into a murderer's cave.
She lifts her eye to heaven—its gloom appals,
No angel there, as once, lost hope recalls,
She hovers o'er the brink of deep despair.
One friend alone is left to succour there,
There death yet stands alone, and props her as she falls.

IX.

Death, pitying stretches forth his meagre hand,
Last, truest friend of all the heirs of wo:
With ready pace she sinks with him below,
And willing seeks the silent shadowy land,
Where every pang is mute, no cares complain,
Where spirits rove ungall'd by earthly chain:
Where worldly scenes like childish dreams depart,
And nought is left but our immortal heart.
How blest! whate'er she lov'd in death to meet again!

X.

Like a mute suffering bloodless lamb she lies,
And sighing, waits the period of her doom:
When in the stillness of the midnight gloom
Titania, breathing solace, o'er her flies,
And sooths her agonies to still repose.
And while soft slumb'rous dews her eyelids close,
And steep the senses in oblivious rest,
In robe of roseate light the fairy drest,
Amid enchanting dreams in radiant beauty glows.

XI.

"Arise! be comforted! thy lord, thy boy,
"Yet breathe, though hid from thee, the vital air:
"They are not lost!—arise from dark despair!
"Look on these features, recogniz'd with joy:
"When, for the third time seen by thee again,
"You loose stern Oberon's oath—you end our pain:
"Then shall your life, like ours, be pure delight."—
She spoke; and vanishes away from sight:
Yet from her roseate crown fresh fragrant airs remain.

XII.

The mourner wakes—and from the fragrant breath
And rosy light that gradually subside,
Recalls the form that, smiling by her side,
(The guardian angel in the cave of death),
Had freed her from her painful pleasing weight.
Touch'd by her care, with grateful heart elate,
Rezia this pledge of fairy grace receives,
Yet, yet they live! her glowing heart believes;
And, anchor'd on that hope, defies the storms of fate.

XIII.

Blest in her ignorance, she knew it not—
Ah! had she known, how her unfriended lord
Had past the dreadful night, with seven-fold cord
Bound to an oak on that deserted spot,
She sure had died—and he, before whose rays
All darkness fades, the guardian god, delays:
While on a heav'n crown'd mountain's cloudless brow,
That shades the sources of old Nile below,
He drinks the balmy gale that round its summit plays.

XIV.

The fairy king with look unbending cast,
Fixes, where Huon droops, his mournful eye,
While from that distance heard, his lowest sigh
In sad vibration fann'd him as it past:
Now on the morning star he turns his view,
And answering groan with groan from sight withdrew:
Then, of the spirits, that from fairy ground,
Or singly, or in groups, their king surround,
A fay the most belov'd, near pensive Oberon drew.

XV.

Pale, without pomp, the fairy softly steals,
Mute views him, in his eye alone exprest
The tender wish to know what heav'd his breast:
Respectful love his tongue in silence seals.
"Look up!" the monarch cries—th' astonish'd spright
Views in a cloud, whose pinions, dark as night,
Cast, as they slowly sail'd, a baleful shade,
Poor Huon's miserable form display'd,
As from a polish'd glass, reflected on his sight.

XVI.

Sunk in the night of unexampled grief,
Drain'd with deep wounds warm bleeding from his heart,
No soothing friend a solace to impart,
No gleam of hope to point afar relief,
Huon with lingering martyr-death decays:
Yet in this state stern thoughts his spirit raise,
Indignant feelings that augment the gloom—
" Did I—did Rezia, then, deserve this doom?
" Or bleed we while stern Heav'n in sportive malice plays?

XVII.

" How! at my wos all peaceful as before!
" How tranquill all! unpitying of my pain:
" No being feels with me—no viewless grain,
" No not a grain of sand upon the shore
" Stirs from its place! From off the woodland glade
" No not a leaflet falls a wretch to aid!
" A little flint would cut with ease the band;
" No, not in all creation, not a hand
" Will deign to move a flint—die! wretch! by all betray'd!

XVIII.

" Yet, if thou didst but will it, thou! whose aid
" Unhop'd, has sav'd me oft when most distrest,
" Didst thou but will, my soul would sink to rest,
" Each twig that trembles in the woodland shade
" Would at a wink, transform'd beneath thy sight,
" Stretch forth a guardian hand!"—Celestial light
Swift vibrates, as he spoke, through every bone:
His bands at once are loos'd—he tumbles prone,
Safe in the viewless arms of some protecting spright.

XIX.

The gentle fay, who in that dreadful hour
Saw in the hovering cloud poor Huon's shade,
Now o'er him stretch'd unseen his guardian aid.
Such horrid scenes the son of light o'erpow'r:
At Oberon's feet he falls oppresst with wo—
" And canst thou, (pointing to the passing show,)
" Canst thou, alas! who once so fondly lov'd,
" Thus from thy friend, though guilty, turn unmov'd?
" While hopeless of relief, he bleeds beneath the blow?"

XX.

'Blind to futurity earth's children stray,'
The king replies. 'Ourselves, each fay and spright,
'Are slaves, thou know'st, to fate's resistless might!—
'In holy gloom high o'er us winds his way,
'All go, where'er his secret influence draws:
'Willing, or not, all own that ruling cause.
'And, in the depth of this abyss unknown,
'That parts me from the knight, one hope alone,
'One hope alone is left by fate's eternal laws.

XXI.

'Haste! thy fleet course to yonder island wing:
'Bear the poor wretch from that abandon'd spot,
'To Tunis bear, before the lowly cot
'Of aged Ibrahim, gard'ner of the king.
'Speed through the paths of air his viewless way:
'Then on a bank of stones the wanderer lay
'Close by the cottage door. Quick! leave the place,
'But fly unseen along th' ethereal space,
'Nor ever to his ear a soothing sound convey.

XXII.

The fairy bows, and vanishing from sight,
Swift as a beam of day to Huon flies:
Loos'd with a touch the seven-fold cord unties,
And on his shoulders lifts th' astonish'd knight:
O'er land and ocean speeds his pathless way,
And lights at Ibrahim's cot ere break of day:
Then shakes him from his back, and rests his head
Soft as on down upon a grassy bed,
While tranc'd as in a dream the knight enchanted lay.

XXIII.

He looks astonish'd round—doubt, dreads to know:
Strange scenes unknown his soul with wonder shake.
Where am I? inly cries, and fears to wake—
Meanwhile an early cock begins to crow,
And soon a second echoes, and a third.
Rous'd labour answers to the calling bird:
The golden gates of morning open wide,
The god of light goes forth in radiant pride,
All lives and moves around, and day's loud hum is heard.

XXIV.

The door now creaks—a lathy man appears
With silver hair, but on his cheek the rose
Still freshly bloom'd; with spade in hand he goes.
Both see and doubt alike, mid hopes and fears—
Sir Huon views his aged trusty 'squire
Step from the cottage door in slave attire:
And Sherasmin beholds the honour'd knight,
Him whom he wept as dead, before his sight:
Yet, ah! his air and mien no cheerful thought inspire.

XXV.

"Is 't possible?" alike each loudly calls—
'Here meet we, my best master?' "Here, my friend?
"Here meet, where hope for ever seem'd to end?"
The 'squire half wild with joy before him falls,
And clasps the prince's knee with friendly glow,
While on his hand warm tears of rapture flow:
And Huon bends his liegeman to embrace,
Kisses his cheek, and lifts him from the place,
"Thank Heaven!" the old man cries, "now, now you live, I know.

XXVI.

" What lucky wind has blown you to this shore?
" Yet, as I hold for chat this open spot
" But little fit, so come within my cot,
" There we may safely talk the subject o'er—
" Come, ere they chance to see, or overhear:
" At all events (he whispers in his ear)
" You are my nephew, one who long'd to roam;
" Hassan your name, Aleppo is your home:
" 'Scap'd, barely 'scap'd with life, a merchant ship-
wreck'd here."

XXVII.

' Yes, nothing left to me, but life alone,'
Says Huon, sighing—' life, by wo opprest!'
" All will be well again—here safely rest!"
Good Sherasmin replies with cheerful tone,
And opes his little chamber—in they go—
" There, take your place:" and from the cupboard row
Brings a clean plate, and on it neatly spread
His choicest dainties, olives, wine, and bread:
Sits by his side, and cries, " Be gay, nor brood on
wo.'

XXVIII.

"Bethink thee, my best master! after all
" The blows and buffets of that scurvy jade,
" Strange whims and freaks by sportive fortune play'd,
" To find ourselves, unhop'd, by Tunis' wall,
" Here at the gard'ner's door, 'tis sure a sign
" That Oberon unseen, by aid divine,
" Will bring us all together safe and sound:
" The best yet fails—she, too, will soon be found:
" Pledge of Amanda's life, the nurse, at least, is thine."

XXIX.

'What say'st thou?' cries Sir Huon, 'in this place?'
" Yes, slave to Ibrahim, that very Turk,
" For whom I daily drudge in hireling work.
" How will she feast her eyes upon your face!"—
Then he begins minutely to relate
His various wanderings from their earliest date,
The difficulties conquer'd, dangers run;
And what had tempted him, the work undone,
From Paris to return, to try again his fate.

XXX.

How he at Rome, for many an anxious week
Had sought him, day by day in misery past:
How that his scanty treasure fail'd at last!
And then, throughout the world, his trace to seek,
How he with staff and cockle-shell array'd,
Through half the globe his pilgrim way had pray'd:
And that at last kind fortune deign'd to guide,
Where he and Fatma jostled side by side,
Both bound to wait till chance more prosperous times display'd.

XXXI.

"My cot the casket luckily contains
"Untouch'd; kind present, which on holy land
"Came from the beauteous dwarf's protecting hand.
"For, as I see, alas! no trace remains
"Of horn of ivory, and that bowl of gold.
"Pardon!—I probe the sore with touch too bold—
"I popt it out too quick—'twas rashly said—
"But thus to find thee! it o'erpowers my head:
"You know my heart—no more—your liegeman as of old."

XXXII.

The knight his liegeman's hand in ardour prest,
Smiles on his honest friend, and kind replies—
'I know thy truth, thy heart abhors disguise—
'All thou shalt hear, from first to last confest:
'But chiefly now, with friendly service aid:
'That precious casket with rich gems inlaid,
'Were it not best to change its brilliant show
'For steeds and knightly arms to face the foe,
'That we again may roam, in warlike trim array'd.

XXXIII.

'Twelve hours are scarcely over, since a band,
'A pirate crew, from these unweapon'd arms
'Dragg'd to their ship Amanda's struggling charms,
'Lone as we roam'd along the dreary strand.
''Chance, to these lands their prey the pirates bear,
'To Fez, or to Morocco, here or there,
'Wherever beauty bears the highest rate—
'There will I shield her from disastrous fate:
'Rezia throughout the world my sole and ceaseless care.'

XXXIV.

The squire in silence ponders o'er and o'er—
" Where you and Rezia dwelt, that barbarous coast,
" Is it, indeed, some few fleet hours at mos.,
" But little distant from old Ibrahim's door?"—
' I know not—here myself at once I found:
' Perhaps a thousand hours have circled round.
' More swift than thought I flew wide ocean o'er,
' Born by some spirit from the woodland shore,
' Where lone I died away in lingering torture bound.'

XXXV.

" That, doubtless, Oberon, our friend has done"—
' In him I firmly trust,' replies the knight:
' And sure by this he deigns his faith to plight.
' The fay will kindly end the work begun.
' Though sad to live in this divided state,
' Though dire that image of severest fate,
' Amanda fiercely grasp'd by pirate bands;
' This miracle with joy my soul expands,
' And hope and heav'nly trust new life, new soul create.

XXXVI.

'He must be wholly artless, wholly stone,
'To him no spark of sense or feeling giv'n,
'A wretch unworthy that protecting heaven
'Should o'er him stretch its arm, in wonders shown,
'Who, had he seen, how glorious to behold!
'But half the wonders I have seen unfold,
'Could stoop to entertain a doubt or fear—
'Lead on, where'er it may, my dark career,
'Through fire and flood, alike, firm hope and faith I hold.

XXXVII.

'But now, if possible, my dearest friend!
'If it be possible, this very day
'Buy me a sword and steed—time flies away,
'Too long unmark'd by fame my years descend:
'Once sweetly past, indeed, by Rezia's side!
'But in this void, thus sever'd from my bride,
'How stagnates, like a swamp, my sleepy blood,
'Till I have sav'd her from the heathen brood!
'A moment may at once her fate and mine decide!'

XXXVIII.

The old man swears that not with him shall rest
The blame, if chance he fail, ere day retires
To gratify the warriour's warm desires:
But unforeseen mischance his zeal repress:
Alas! ere yet expected evening came,
Down sunk poor Huon's grief-exhausted frame.
O'erpower'd by trials, blows succeeding blows,
He throbs mid burning pangs without repose,
And on his sleepless eye wild fev'rous visions flame.

XXXIX.

The images which start before his sight,
Vain brood of fancy, glow like real life:
He thinks he struggles in the deadly strife
With numerous foes, and maddens in the fight.
Now powerless faints—now clasps with icy arms
His son's dead body—now with wild alarms
Buffets the flood, and by the border holds
Sunk Rezia's floating robe—in sev'n-wreath'd folds
Now strives, while pirates grasp her bruis'd and bleeding charms.

XL.

Half wild with rage and anguish, from his bed
He leaps with haggard look—Th' experienc'd skill
Of Shera\min avail'd to sooth the ill.
The 'squire in days of chivalry, was bred
As well to heal, as to inflict the wound:
He from his sire, wise leach of art profound,
To many a drug and potent herb was heir:
And learnt from knights and wizards secrets rare,
Taught him from time to time, where'er he journey'd round.

XLI.

When dim-discern'd upon the heavenly steep
Glimmers the star of morn, away he wends,
(While careful Fatma on her lord attends,
And all is mute and sunk in peaceful sleep),
To cull, best-gather'd in the dewy hour,
The lenient simple, herb, and opiate flower;
(A holy man at Horeb taught their use)
And presses them and forms a mingled juice,
Whose sov'reign balm subdues the fever's utmost pow'r.

XLII.

Bath'd in soft dew, on Huon's tranquil brow,
Soother of wo, propitious sleep descends,
While o'er his couch unwearied friendship bends:
Life's temperate streams in equal current flow.
And now with strength renew'd, and spirits gay,
When nature freshens in the moonlight ray,
Beneath her silver beams in slave attire,
Provided for him by his trusty 'squire,
Amid the Harem bow'rs Sir Huon winds his way.

XLIII.

Not yet his step, from many an opening rose,
Nigh to the cot, had brush'd the pearly tear,
When with quick pace behold the nurse appear;
Who to the harem oft in secret goes
From time to time, to fish out something new:
She brings a tale whose lightest words subdue,
More soft than opiate drop, the fever's rage;
New brace the nerves, and troublous thoughts assuage—
"Knight! your Amanda lives, and lives not far from you!"

XLIV.

'Where is she, where?' cries Huon, while the glow
Of hot impatience crimson'd on his cheek—
'Where didst thou see her?—speak, dear Fatma! speak—'
"See her!—I said not that, dear master! no—
"But, Sir! I bring no tale of idle fame—
"Trust me, this evening here Amanda came:
"With patience hear th' adventure newly told,
"Hear what Salome deign'd but now unfold,
"Who late the harem left, a shrewd and trusty dame.

XLV.

"But now, ere close of day, (Salome said,)
"A ship was in the offing seen to ride,
"With bird-like swiftness darting through the tide,
"Fresh o'er the wave the fav'ring sea-breeze play'd,
"At once, beneath a pure and cloudless sky,
"Zigzag the vollied lightning burst from high;
"And instant as the storm began to rave,
"Amid the billows of the boiling wave
"The ship, a sheet of flame, flash'd horrour on the eye.

XLVI.

" None strive to quench the flame with effort vain:
" More fiercely round them roars its fiery breath;
" Whoe'er can spring, to 'scape devouring death
" Leaps from the jaws of hell, in hopes to gain
" The pinnace to the burning vessel bound:
" The whirlwinds loose it eddying round and round,
" And while the crew now near and nearer reach,
" And touch, with outstretch'd arm, the neighb'ring beach,
" The boat mid surging waves sinks in the deep profound.

XLVII.

" In vain to Mahomet they shriek aloud—
" While death each bosom fills with wild alarm,
" And desperate efforts tire each lab'ring arm,
" In vain, they struggle with th' infuriate flood—
" One, one alone, at that terrific hour,
" The while resistless waves their prey devour,
" Fav'rite of partial heaven, is seen to glide,
" As in a car of triumph o'er the tide,
" And land, with robe scarce wet, as touch'd by vernal show'r.

XLVIII.

" With lov'd Almansaris the sultan stood,
" Upon a terrace, whose aërial brow
" O'erlook'd the sea that beat its base below,
" And watch'd the issue of the warring flood.
" There as they gaz'd, kind zephyrs fann'd the air
" That tow'rds them softly blew the floating fair.
" Yet still mistrustful of the work of chance,
" Almansor points, an hundred slaves advance,
" And from the roaring waves the matchless beauty bear.

XLIX.

" 'Tis said the sultan hasten'd to the beach,
" And to the fair one, (whom a sturdy slave
" Bore on his shoulders from the surgy wave)
" Himself in person deign'd his arm to reach.
" None what he whisper'd could distinctly hear,
" Tho' oft with courteous speech he sooth'd her ear;
" But sure his smile her peerless charms confest,
" And in his glowing eye all view'd exprest,
" A look, that more than words, portray'd warm love sincere.

L.

" Be this, Sir, as it may, at least believe
" That sly Almansaris, once fav'rite fair,
" Greets the sweet stranger with most courteous air,
" And specious tales that flatter to deceive;
" Tho', at first view, her charms and lovely mien,
" Such as Almansor's eye had never seen,
" Inflam'd at once his fascinated heart—
" Moreover, Sir, the stranger lives apart,
" The summer-house is hers, once destin'd for the queen."

LI.

Now while she speaks, joy, anguish, pleasure, pain,
On Huon's changeful visage Fatma views,
Distinctly mark'd in passion's glowing hues.
'Tis Rezia sure!—not truth itself more plain:
The more he weighs the wonders, one by one,
The more he thinks it certain as the sun,
That Oberon, though viewless, deigns to guide
His destin'd path, and o'er his fate preside—
' Well, then, your counsel, friends! say, what shall now be done?'

LII.

" To force Amanda from the sultan's pow'r,
" Not Roland's self had ever dar'd advise;
" Too rash th' adventure," Sherasmin replies—
" Yet let us guard against the trying hour;
" And now with secret arms ourselves provide,
" 'Gainst every chance that may, or not, betide.
" But try, Sir! first, if art may haply aid,
" And, since it shame you not to use a spade,
" Here bow to daily work, in Ibrahim's service ply'd.

LIII.

" Grant that the man at first look somewhat cool,
" That his wise noddle many a scruple make,
" Let not such trifles, Sir! your courage shake:
" A sparkling diamond shall his doubts o'er-rule.
" This task, without a fear, to me resign,
" Spite of his scruples, Sir! the man is mine—
" Let Sherasmin alone: ere early morn,
" A gard'ner's apron shall your limbs adorn;
" And time, and fav'ring Heav'n, shall aid the just
design."

LIV.

The new device finds favour in his sight,
And all succeeds, at once completely done;
The aged Ibrahim is quickly won,
And for his nephew owns th' adopted knight:
His sister's son, from fam'd Damascus' bowers,
Skill'd in the care and management of flow'rs—
In short, within the harem garden plac'd,
With new investiture Sir Huon grac'd,
Gladly accepts the charge, and waits propitious hours.

OBERON.

CANTO XI.

I.

HOPE, that again from her celestial plume
O'er Huon waves the day-dream of delight
That brings Amanda to his ravish'd sight,
Restores the radiance of his youthful bloom.
The thought that near him breathes th' angelick fair,
The thought, that every breath of fragrant air
Which cools him as it fans the orange groves,
Has lately kist the cheek of her he loves,
And play'd around her lip, and stol'n its fragrance there:

II.

The thought, that those fresh flowers, which rang'd with care,
He wreathes in curious knots, and garlands gay,
To send them to the harem day by day,
May interlace Amanda's braided hair;
May shadowing o'er her snowy bosom lie,
And there dissolv'd in sweeter fragrance die:
These thoughts, with new delight his spirits fire,
Relume the glow of love, and warm desire,
And paint his roseate cheek, and gem his sparkling eye.

III.

Here sultry day sustains the charge of night,
And long meridian hours the senses steep,
In lazy visions of luxurious sleep.
When eve awakes the sportive zephyrs light,
Unwearied Huon by sweet hope delay'd,
His Rezia seeks in each sequester'd shade:
The night he knows is past in waking hours;
And, ah! amid the harem's guarded bow'rs,
No shape of man is seen when day begins to fade.

IV.

Then beauteous nymphs beneath the rosy glance,
When twilight tints with soften'd gleam illume
The night, scarce ever sunk in deeper gloom;
Now pair by pair, or choir with choir, advance,
And lightly trip along the rustling wood,
And oft with voice and lute, in sportive mood
Shorten the swift-wing'd hours—then crystal waves
Invite the bather to sequester'd caves,
Where not Almansor dares (so custom wills) intrude.

V.

What chance, alas! was in the lover's power,
What gleam of transient hope to see his bride,
(Who, as Sir Huon thinks, did here reside,)
Save, rash defiance of the sacred hour.
Amid these grounds with fearful fond delight,
Thrice had he watch'd the long unquiet night,
Hid in a thicket near the blooming grove,
Which all must pass who from the harem rove,
Thrice watch'd, and look'd in vain—no trace had blest
his sight.

VI.

By Fatma, Sherasmin, and Ibrahim won,
(Who falling at his feet, with earnest pray'r
Implore the knight, their lives and his to spare,
Nor dare again such dreadful hazard run,)
He, the fourth eve, when sinks the car of day,
And o'er the groves faint twilight shadows play,
With heart-felt anguish marks the parting hour;
When, homeward as he winds around a bower,
Almansaris appears, and stops at once his way.

VII.

She came soft-leaning on her fav'rite's arm,
She came warm-panting from the sultry hours
To rove mid fragrant shades of orange bow'rs.
A veil, light-shadowing each voluptuous charm,
Fine-spun as if aërial spiders wove
A web to deck, not hide the form of love,
Play'd round her limbs half seen—a wreath of gold
Confin'd her breast, that swell'd its slender fold,
And with impatience sweet to burst its bondage strove.

VIII.

Never will nature in her loveliest mould
So fine a model for a Venus frame,
As stood the goddess that before him came:
There might th' enlighten'd eye of taste behold
Where o'er her form the flowing outline glides,
Which in soft wave now swells, and now subsides:
There that harmonious grace, so rarely seen,
That wins its way each mark'd extreme between,
And swift to stony hearts the shaft of passion guides.

IX.

Perfection reign'd alike in every part:
There all that Attic skill divinely wrought,
What Alcamenes and Lysippus sought,
Th' ideal beauties of illumin'd art
In union met—Alone, she all possest—
Thy lip, Erigone! and Helen's breast;
Such Atalanta's knee, and Leda's arm—
Yet never Greece conceiv'd that nameless charm
Which thrill'd the inmost soul when love her wish expresst.

x.

The god of soft voluptuousness imparts,
Mixt with her breath, his spirit to the gale
That blows around her, seeming to exhale
Her glowing passions—love's resistless darts
Beam from her eye—save, save thyself by flight!
Resist, if possible, the fiery light
Of that inviting glance which lures the soul:
How scorn those lips that every heart control?
Ah! how behold that smile with unenchanted sight?

xi.

Can Huon these resist?—peace! trembler, peace!
Nor dread the shipwreck that resistless seems!
The storm may pass—yet, sure, in such extremes,
Nought from perdition can the wretch release
But instant flight—but now, what hope of flight,
When the fair siren stood before his sight?—
A gard'ner would have fled in Huon's place.
The flow'rets that by luck his basket grace,
If chance she deign enquire, may aid the answ'ring knight.

THE BOMBAY

Fuseli pinxit. Cromek sculp.

Published March 1st 1808, by Cadell & Davies, Strand.

XII.

The fair sultana naturally starts
To see a man, a stranger in her way—
"What dost thou here?" while passion's fiery ray
Flash'd from her eye, and shot indignant darts
Of pow'r to strike with death each timid slave—
But Huon dar'd th' impending danger brave,
Dar'd with sunk eyelid near the goddess draw,
And lowly bending down, with noble awe,
The fruits and fragrant flowers a graceful offering gave.

XIII.

'Tis true—for her he had transgress'd the time,
'To cull for her an offering had presum'd,
'Fruits of fair growth, and flowers that freshly bloom'd;
'Had he too rashly dar'd, too great the crime,
'His life must expiate the zealous deed.'—
Yet her soft look a milder death decreed,
While at her feet the beauteous gard'ner lies:
Fixt on his charms she feasts her ravish'd eyes,
And seems with tardy pace unwilling to proceed.

XIV.

A youth most beauteous in his form and mien,
A hero crown'd with majesty and grace,
Of fair and foreign colour in that place,
And as a gard'ner clad—discordant scene!
Fain would the queen more curiously enquire,
But decency restrain'd the warm desire—
At length she waves him from the spot away:
Yet as he goes, a look that bids him stay,
Shot forth a side-long glance deep fraught with inward fire.

XV.

In pensive silence wrapt she paces slow,
Bends her fair neck stretch'd back in fond presage,
And feels her bosom throb with sudden rage,
That he at once obey'd, as glad to go.
Was he too coy to read her look aright?
Fails that heroick form in inward light?
Deceives it, then, that mien so nobly bold?
Did peril turn his life-blood icy cold?
Or came he, daring youth! to seek some form less bright?

XVI.

Another form!—that doubt at once unveils
What to herself she blushes to reveal.
Where'er she strays his shade is seen to steal,
In grove or glade that image never fails.
She roves the livelong night—to every breeze
Lists as it softly sighs amid the trees:
Starts, if a leaf against a leaf is heard—
"Still!" cries she to her fav'rite—"there it stirr'd!
"Hark! mid yon hedge it mov'd—O say, what fancy sees!"

XVII.

'Perhaps the beauteous gard'ner,'—sly replies
The cunning maid—'if all deceive me not,
'The daring youth, amid that covert spot,
'Death, tenfold death, without a fear, defies,
'Once more in ambush, in this sacred place,
'To feast in silence on each Houri grace
'That wings to Paradise his blissful soul—
'What if we softly to surprise him stole,
'And seize him in the fact, and charge him face to face?'

XVIII.

"Hush!—silence, madcap!" cries the harem queen,
"Thou prattlest nonsense, child! in idle trance?"—
Yet all the time her noiseless feet advance
Where the light branches were in motion seen:
'Twas but a lizard that had chanc'd to slide
From the green bush, and cross the pathway glide.
A sigh half utter'd, while it heav'd her breast,
And, mid the fragrant nosegay half-suppress,
Confirms what in her look Nadina's glance descry'd.

XIX.

She turns away, and with herself displeas'd,
Now bites her glowing lip, now deeply sighs,
Mutters strange sounds, and to herself replies:
Says something, nothing—bids, each moment teas'd,
Nadina answer what she can't divine—
What need we more?—irrefragable sign!
Our fair sultana is o'erwhelm'd with love—
Her flowers are doom'd, indeed, the fact to prove,
Nipt, scatter'd leaf by leaf, and tost without design.

XX.

Three days already had the pang endur'd,
That ever by resistance fiercer grew,
And each succeeding day fresh nurture drew.
Whene'er eve's grateful beams her step allur'd,
Painting the windows streak'd with many a ray,
Nymph-like with hair-bound hair she winds her way
With restless motion through each dark alcove,
Along the shadowy lawn, and silent grove,
Where'er the gard'ner youth, like her, may lonely stray.

XXI.

In vain she watches, while impatient wo
Throbs in her breast—no more through glade or grove,
Or o'er the lawn the youth is seen to rove.
Ah! lost Almansaris! thy pride forego—
Resistless love subdues imperial pride—
"Why rack thy soul," she thinks, "from one so try'd,
"From kind Nadina idly to conceal,
"What to thyself her lip might sure reveal?
"Ah! canst thou heal the wound thou striv'st in vain to hide?"

XXII.

And sure she wants a friend's consoling breast:—
No—'tis a flatterer that the woman needs—
Nadina in this art her sex exceeds—
Not all the juice from every plantain prest
On Afric's soil, had so refresh'd the frame,
Or sooth'd the fierceness of th' internal flame,
In this resistless siren's glowing veins,
As good Nadina's kind unwearied pains
Within her amorous net to lure the lovely game.

XXIII.

Through ev'ry bolted door, at night unseen,
To bring him to the court where, unrestrain'd,
Almansaris without a witness reign'd,
And place the youth before the longing queen,
Seem'd little arduous to her subtile mind;
Since that the king had openly resign'd
To Zoradine the empire of his breast.
For thus the lovely stranger was addrest,
Who landed there, heav'n-sent, the wonder of her kind.

XXIV.

No dream deceiv'd gay Fatma's glowing thought:
It was Amanda, whom the viewless pow'r
Of kind Titania, o'er the stormy hour
Safe from the pirate crew by lightning brought,
And blew her, as in triumph, to the strand—
'Tis known what happen'd when she came to land;
How soon Almanser lost his fickle heart,
How well Almansaris perform'd her part,
And with pretended love reach'd forth her guileful hand.

XXV.

The sultan was, perhaps, of all mankind,
The loveliest mortal eye had ever seen;
Triumphant beauty in his matchless mien,
Whene'er he sued, each female heart inclin'd.
A sultan, and thus grac'd, ah! who can shun?
But now he lost all former glory won:
For Zoradine there lives but one on earth;
She sees not, hears not, feels no other worth,
Has eyes, and sense, and soul, for him, and him alone.

XXVI.

Grace without guile, decorum without pride,
The native dignity that virtue knows,
The calm indifference, the serene repose,
And coldness that the soul disdains to hide;
These, which to winning loveliness impart
Resistless pow'r to sway the human heart,
And at her will the wretched king constrain
To go without a look that dares complain—
These, the sultana deems the masterpiece of art.

XXVII.

Long us'd to wind the sultan at command,
To lord it o'er the harem uncontrol'd,
Can proud Almansaris the change behold?
Nor mourn the sceptre wheedled from her hand?
She greets her rival with delusive smile;
Fraud masks her face, and flatters to beguile;
Her dearest friend, fair Zoradine she calls,
She doubts her not!—but, ah! the harem walls
Are full of viewless eyes, that watch her all the while.

XXVIII.

But since her bosom glow'd with other fires,
By Hassan pierc'd with passion's venom'd dart,
Love leaves no place for envy in her heart.
Ambition yields to far more sweet desires,
To feast unsated on his matchless charms—
Coy Hassan's pride alone her pride alarms.
Almansor, and the world itself, may fall
Before the stranger's feet—she scorns them all,
If love but lead the youth to her triumphant arms.

XXIX.

For this the queen promotes her lord's design,
With royal splendour, far from her apart,
To lodge the rival that enslaves his heart—
Their mutual wishes mutually combine—
There uncontrol'd fair Zoradine remains,
And honours suited to her birth obtains;
Though both her rank and birth are yet unknown—
Yet instant in her look 'tis plainly shown
Such awe-commanding grace o'er all superiour reigns.

XXX.

While fair Almansaris with seeming grace
Removes, by artful courtesy polite,
A rival and a witness from her sight,
Whose eye each secret plan might closely trace;
Almansor wholly to his love resign'd
Leaves the sultana free and unconfin'd
To pass her time and leisure as she can,
And weave at liberty each secret plan,
Where slaves at will start up to serve her subtile mind.

XXXI.

Meantime with grief the beauteous gard'ner dies—
With unsuccessful toil, sev'n tedious days,
Around the harem's wall the lover strays,
Where Rezia, sure, with equal misery sighs—
Too well his feelings, what she feels declare:
Yet not a ray had gleam'd on dark despair:
Not through a lattice had he seen his bride;
His search no traces of her steps descried,
Trace known wherever seen, tho' thousand others there.

XXXII.

Bow'd down with grief, before his friends he falls—
" And cannot, then, your love procure," he said,
" At least one harem slave my cause to aid?
" To whisper but my name amid yon walls,
" That I am nigh to whisper in her ear?"—
' A sudden thought now strikes me—yes—'tis clear'—
Fatma replies, ' Thy selam quickly send—
' Go, cull the flow'rets destin'd for that end.
' Sir, in that language view no mean proficient here.'

XXXIII.

As Fatma bids, he culls fresh lilies fair,
And myrtle blooming on the flow'ry spray,
The rose, the jasmin, and the jonquil gay:
Then from his ringlets draws a yellow hair—
With wire of gold her artful fingers wind
The intermingled braids that closely bind
The nosegay rang'd in love-expressive rows;
And on a laurel which the flow'rs enclose,
An A and H are mark'd, in amorous cipher join'd.

XXXIV.

'Now if I sprinkle o'er this wreath the dew
'Of fragrant cinnamon, the flow'rs will prove
'The fairest letter ever sent by love—
'Shall I unfold the meaning—give the clue?
'And, word by word, the mystick nosegay read?'—
"Oh! lose no time!—a thousand thanks!—speed! speed!
"You cannot quick enough the answer bring—
"Love guard and waft you with auspicious wing—
"We wait you on this turf—adieu!—may all succeed!"

XXXV.

Good Fatma hastens at her lord's command;
And since no chamber of the inner court
Was open to a menial of her sort,
The nosegay circles round from hand to hand,
And is by Chance (who comes without a call,
And tosses at her will this earthly ball)
Seiz'd by Nadina in ill-omen'd hour—
She for her mistress claims the love-wreath'd flow'r,
And many a question asks to sift the truth of all.

XXXVI.

Since Fatma, slave of Ibrahim, brought it there,
How could conjecture other thoughts conceive,
Than, that young Hassan did the nosegay weave,
And sent it to the fairest of the fair?
That, sure, is truth indisputably clear.
All that had happen'd drew the thing more near—
What could the A and H, twin-cipher, say?
Almansaris and Hassan, clear as day—
Lo! wreath'd by love's own hand, their wedded names appear.

XXXVII.

And had she (though it cannot be believ'd)
A rival, to her matchless beauty blind,
What greater glory to her haughty mind,
Than, while the wretch in pining silence griev'd,
By force to take the booty from her foe—
Keen jealous pangs which in her bosom glow,
With thoughts of melting tenderness unite,
And urge her not to leave a second night
The triumph incomplete that flattering hopes foreshow.

XXXVIII.

Meanwhile transported with assur'd success,
Of errour and deceit suspecting nought,
Her cheek warm-glowing from extatic thought,
Flies Fatma back—her looks from far express
The stream of rapture that her breast o'erflows:
Gaily they shine as bright the sun-beam glows,
When from the golden orb the vapours clear—
"Name my reward" (she whispers in his ear)
"For you, this very day, the gates of heaven unclose.

XXXIX.

"This day my lord beholds again his bride:
"Beneath the midnight silence softly move,
"The door is open of the myrtle grove,
"Watch'd by the slave who waits thy step to guide:
"Follow where'er she leads, nor fear a snare,
"Safe shall she guide thee to th' impatient fair."—
Poor simple Fatma, who no fraud suspects,
All fear and caution equally rejects,
And decks with golden hues her castle in the air.

XL.

'How am I ever to my Fatma bound!
'I shall again that angel face behold—
'This night again, ere morn's new beams unfold!
'Ah! if I knew that death with terrours crown'd
'Should strike, on my return, my hapless head,
'Yet not the less delight thy words had shed.'—
"My best, my dearest master! have good heart!
"The stars look kindly down, they take our part:
"Soon will you see the bride," his happy liegeman said.

XLI.

"Give me three days in secrecy to hire
"A little pinnace in a shelter'd bay,
"Which, not far distant, safe at anchor lay:
"And all prepar'd, and ready at desire,
"Whene'er a fav'ring moment we behold
"To waft us at our pleasure uncontrol'd,
"The casket, Sir, soon makes the thing complete:
"But gold enough, the world is at your feet!
"All locks at once fly back when touch'd by key of gold!"

XLII.

While on his pulse, where throbbing passions beat,
The youth computes the period of his bliss,
Still over-reckons it, and tells amiss;
As every instant wild impetuous heat
New quickens, stroke on stroke, the countless tide;
Not less the queen's wing'd thoughts each moment chide:
Array'd for victory she calls the knight.
Kind fortune aids her vision of delight,
All obstacles removes, and smiles on every side.

XLIII.

A feast beneath the sultan's golden roof,
In honour of fair Zoradine prepar'd,
Where every odalisc the labour shar'd,
From fair Almansaris kept all aloof.
That, at the banquet, the sultana queen
Should think superfluous her unwelcome mien,
Each cunning courtier, sure, no wonder deems:
The sudden sickness not unnatural seems.
It comes a bidden guest, and shuts her from the scene.

XLIV.

The hour now calls—obedient to command
The beauteous gard'ner hastens, still as death.
At the low door arriv'd, how fails his breath,
When in the darkness felt, a female hand
Catches his arm, and forward softly leads:
Mute to her silent step his step succeeds:
The guide, now up, now down, through narrow rows,
Dark intermingling vaulted alleys goes:
Then slips at once away—a door his path impedes.

XLV.

"Where are we?" Huon says, and softly taps—
At once the door expands—a tender gleam,
(Faint as through myrtle groves the soften'd beam
Dies gradually away, where ivy wraps
Its glossy mantle round the vernal sprays,)
Soft on a suit of endless chambers plays,
And imperceptibly the tender light
At every step becomes more bright and bright,
Till mingling flames on flames with highest lustre blaze.

XLVI.

He startles at the pomp, which far outshines
Each brilliant scene his eye had e'er survey'd:
There gold and lazuli the walls o'erlaid:
There Siam and Golconda's rifled mines
Seem'd to have center'd their exhausted store,
By wanton luxury lavish'd o'er and o'er:
Yet still unsatisfied, his vacant eye
Seeks her—Where is she?—as h' breathes the sigh,
A curtain flies away that play'd Fs eye before.

XLVII.

On either side back flies th' embroider'd gold—
A scene celestial fascinates his gaze!
On throne of gold a dame in beauty's blaze,
Glows like the form that thoughts entranc'd behold,
When by the warmth of youthful fancy won,
A Venus smiles in airy texture spun.
Twelve nymphs, love's sisters, young and full of charms,
In groups around her weave their floating arms,
Like twilight, to exalt the triumph of the sun.

XLVIII.

Each lightly shaded by a roseate veil,
Before their sov'reign's feet the sister's seem
Like little clouds, that in the poet's dream
Around the car of Cytherea sail.
The queen in brilliancy of art array'd,
Jewels and pearls in many a curious braid,
Shows that th' unnotic'd diamond's sun-like rays
Fail to eclipse the self-resplendent blaze
Which round th' unrivall'd charms of native beauty play'd.

XLIX.

Sir Huon, (now the gard'ner Hassan call'd)
Soon as he views the goddess face to face,
And knows Almansaris, with falt'ring pace
Starts back, like one bewilder'd and appal'd.
This sweet enchanting visionary sight,
Ah? what to him?—a dream without delight—
'Tis not Amanda—sense, heart, soul is hers—
Almansaris, who pardonably errs,
Thinks that her blazing charms alone the youth affright.

L.

She, smiling pleasure, from her throne descends,
And takes him by the hand, and ready seems
To lay aside that pomp whose dazzling beams
O'erpow'r the slave, who back confus'dly bends.
She wishes no advantage but her charms.
Now bolder grown, to stifle his alarms,
Swift darting glance on glance, enamour'd rays,
While in his breast the spark elec ric plays,
She fondly clasps his hand—"Oh! smile, nor 'ear these arms!"

LI.

Half unresolv'd his look a sense conveys:
She winks the nymphs away—his courage dies—
He seems too timid e'en to lift his eyes.
Another part the fair seducer plays.
A second veil flies back by magick call—
Th' enchantress summons to a splendid hall
Her coy mute swain—in gay festoons around
Bloom'd many a wreath with rose and myrtle crown'd,
That grac'd a godlike feast, whose taste might life recall.

LII.

Gay song and shout their entrance loud proclaim,
And wire and voice announce the god of joy;
And Hassan sits (avails it to be coy?)
There where she points, and fronts th' inviting dame—
Now warm desire, now passion unallay'd,
And wild impatience, furtively betray'd
Young Hassan's triumph—yet in vain they speak,
Mark'd in her swimming glance, and glowing cheek—
Pale gleams his rayless eye thro' sorrow's gloomy shade.

LIII.

Indeed, no longer coy, his fearless view
Free wanders o'er her charms from part to part,
Yet from his eye no gleams of passion dart:
No look of answering love her glances drew.
He seems contrasted beauties to compare;
While artful graces opening like a snare
With livelier colours picture in his mind
Amanda's loveliness of angel kind.
Before her modest charms the wanton melts in air.

LIV.

In vain she reaches him the cup of gold,
With looks wherein her soul such fire exprest
As pours at once love's quiver in his breast—
Not at the gayest feast the heavens behold,
With lovelier smile enchanting Hebe young
Presents to Hercules, the gods among,
The nectar bowl—in vain—his frosty lip
Loaths the sweet juice the goddess deigns to sip,
And tastes as if he felt infection on his tongue.

LV.

She winks, and swift the sister bands advance,
The nymphs who late encompassing their queen,
Round her bright throne like hov'ring clouds were seen,
And range themselves to wind the magick dance;
The magick dance, of pow'r the dead to raise,
Or draw embodied spirits down to gaze.
Now, pair by pair, now group by group unite
The loveliest forms in thousand folded light
That twinkle to and fro, and wreathe the wanton maze.

LVI.

The noble youth unwillingly betray'd,
Feels nature melt in this forbidden glow:
Yet turns, half-tempted, from the siren show,
And calls Amanda's image to his aid,
Calls from that happy hour, when first carest,
Warm on his mouth her virgin kiss imprest,
His soul in ecstacy of ardent youth,
Before th' attested god of love and truth,
The vow of love and truth with pious lip addrest.

LVII.

He swears the vow anew in holy thought,
Swears on his knee that heavenly form before:
Soon as his soul the vow in secret swore,
At once it seems as if an angel brought
A shield from heaven—unfelt at distance glance
The arrows darted in her amorous trance—
The queen his speaking features understands,
Reads his chang'd soul, and as she clasps her hands,
Swift ceases in a wink the soft seductive dance.

LVIII.

And, though she scarce upon herself prevail
Not to embrace him with resistless charms,
And force the stone to feel within her arms,
She tries another proof that cannot fail—
Her winning lute she suffers to be brought,
Then on a pillowy throne for pleasure wrought,
Softly reclines—and while love's radiant fire
Darts from her charms the magick of desire,
Who can resist the muse that paints th' enamour'd
thought?

LIX.

Sweet was the melody, its language plain:
It spoke the sufferings of a female slave,
Who long had brooded silent as the grave,
O'er love that rack'd her soul with ceaseless pain:
Th' all-pow'rful passion conquers fear and shame:
Her speaking blushes to the youth proclaim
Alike his triumph, and her thrilling smart—
The lay was in a book—'twas in her heart!
Sings no one as she sung, who feels not equal flame.

LX.

At last, in overpow'ring feelings tranc'd,
Th' unnotic'd lute falls silent from her hand:
But, at the instant that her arms expand,
Huon, whose eye with scornful virtue glanc'd,
Grasps with enthusiast haste the falling wire,
And thunders from the strings with prophet fire:
The hero on its bold responsive tone
Dares faith and feeling for another own,
And vows that heaven and earth can wake no new desire.

LXI.

Firm was his tone, his high heroick look
Glow'd like a god.—Th' enchantress, 'gainst her will,
Feels his superiour force—tears wildly fill
Her eye indignant—pride and passion shook
Her soul with pangs, she cannot, wretch! disguise—
To veil her shame from sight away she flies:
Loath'd is the light—too close the spacious hall,
While with a look that might his soul appal,
She winks her slaves to bear the rebel from her eyes.

LXII.

Already in the morning's purple light
The mountains gleam, when sunk in deep despair
Sad Huon hastens back—his gloomy air
Alarms his friends, who heartless at the sight,
Read, ere he speaks, the tenour of his tale—
" Ah! luckless wretch!" he cries—while Fatma, pale,
Sinks to the earth before his feet for shame—
" Where were thy senses?—yet, not thee I blame:
" Thou wert thyself deceiv'd—my evil stars prevail."

LXIII.

And when he tells what past, in high disdain
Sudden he grasps the old man on the breast,
And bids him witness vows to heaven addrest:
He swears not hostile Africk shall restrain
His firm resolve, with conqu'ring sword and shield,
As fits a warriour bred in glory's field,
To force the palace gates without delay,
And bear Amanda from the king away—
How artifice avails, thyself hast seen reveal'd.

LXIV.

But at his feet his trusty liegeman prays
The fiery knight; long prays, indeed, in vain,
That he would yet, a little time, restrain
His rash impatience but for three short days—
For three short days his rank and purpose hide:
And not at once, without a hope to guide,
His life and Rezia's madly fling away:
He only asks, he says, this short delay,
That for their flight his zeal may all in time provide.

LXV.

And on her bended knee poor Fatma pleads,
Proffers her willing neck to meet the blow,
If in this interval she fail to show
The way that to his lov'd Amanda leads.
Might she but once again in search be sent,
No errour, sure, should frustrate her intent.
The knight by sober counsel cools his brain,
Gives them his word, and patiently again
Submits to daily toil, and waits the wish'd event.

OBERON.

CANTO XII.

I.

MEANWHILE Almansaris, her soul on fire,
Wild passion raging in her fiery breast,
Seeks on her damask couch assuasive rest:
In vain—wild groans the demon of desire.
The strange adventures of that shameful night
Illusive all: a man thy beauty slight!
Behold, Almansaris! thy wondrous charms!
Sigh for another—fly thy opening arms!
And scorn thee to thy face?—vain dream that mock'd
the sight!

II.

These thoughts to maddening rage her soul inflame:
Death, tenfold death, shall expiate the offence!
How loath'd the monster that bewitch'd her sense!
A dragon seems far lovelier to the dam ..
Now pride and jealousy the wretch detest,
The furious fit now dies, by love suppress—
Desire and vengeance swift as thought succeed:
Before her, drop by drop, the wretch shall bleed!—
Now, in her arms enchain'd, she dies upon his breast!

III.

Now, while enchanting loveliness adorns,
He comes the first of all the sons of earth,
A hero, god, surpassing human birth.
He, Ibrahim's nephew! love that treason scorns;
His port majestick, awe-attemper'd grace,
And bold demeanour, each reveals a trace
Of that high rank he labours to conceal.
Plain on his brow proud nature stamps the seal,
That marks the king ordain'd to rule man's subject race.

IV.

Of all the sons of earth, he, he alone
Form'd for the heaven of her infolding arms:
She wields no thunderbolt to blast the charms
That round his heart have magick fetters thrown,
And dare awhile her victory oppose.
Rise, fair Almansaris! thy charms disclose;
Let him in idle pride his plumes expand,
And with heroick scorn thy pow'r withstand,
O'er souls thus hard to tame the pride of victory glows.

V.

Revive, Almansaris! assail his heart
With native charms by beauty self-possest:
Assur'd of victory, from their pow'r divest
The vain parade of adventitious art;
Let art and all her retinue retire:
Flash on his sight what gods themselves desire:
Then, if the rebel scorn—arise! 'tis time—
Queen! arm offended pride—avenge the crime!
And in the traitour's blood allay indignant ire!

VI.

So whispers from the sly Nadina's lips,
The little demon on this earthly round,
Who, with full quiver, sits in triumph crown'd,
And ere he wings the dart with venom dips:
His poison'd bowl the madd'ning world inflames!
Who knows him not the insidious fiend proclaims
The god of love—ah! how unjustly call'd!
Ye artless simple maidens! list, appal'd,
For he, who better knows, that fiend, Asmodeus, names.

VII.

Almansaris, in whose empassion'd blood
A sly seducer creeps, her soul resigns,
Follows where'er th' infernal fiend inclines,
And sinks in willing slavery, self-subdu'd.
The breath that feeds and fans th' internal glow,
Prepares the welcome triumph of the foe.
Asmodeus conquers by a flatterer's tongue,
Closely, who winds her fathom'd thoughts among,
And weaves a subtile plan that lures with specious show.

VIII.

Oh! from the lightning steal their wings of fire!
Ye hours! O haste! th' expected moment bring!
How slow your flight, tho' sped with lightning wing!
How lingering for the wish of wild desire!—
Yet not alone the fair sultana deems
Time's pinion chain'd—each lingering moment seems
To Huon's sense in iron fetters bound:
For, ah! three loath'd long days must circle round,
And, sleeping or awake, his soul of Rezia dreams.

IX.

At last, oh joy! the second morn arose,
Rose to the longing of the harem queen:
In golden pomp along the blue serene
Bright morn before her like a herald goes,
Proud to announce the triumph of the fair:
Fresh through the myrtles breathes the fragrant air,
Which, thickly twin'd, the loveliest grot surround:
And thousand tuneful trills of birds resound,
That from the neighb'ring wood a thousand echoes bear.

X.

Yet nought is heard around the myrtle grove,
Where stands in twilight shade the shrine of rest.
Save (to her mate, close billing breast to breast)
The love-breath'd murmur of the turtle-dove:
Here, unprofan'd by stranger footsteps rude,
In the dark seat of hidden solitude,
The fair sultana at the morning hour
Not seldom haunts the solitary bow'r,
To bathe where pleasant shades the glaring sun exclude.

XI.

The balmy spirit of the breeze of morn
From restless dreams impatient Hassan drew,
While others slept, his labours to renew,
And with fresh flow'rs his blooming wreaths adorn,
Gift to the harem beauties day by day.
A panting negro meets him on the way,
Bids him with flow'rets deck the lonely cave;
And adds, to spur him on, that in the wave
A fav'rite lady there will bathe without delay.

XII.

To execute the slavish task enjoin'd,
With loitering step incurious Huon goes;
His largest basket fills with fragrant rows,
Sweet Flora's various treasures intertwin'd,
And unsuspicious at th' appointed hour
Bears the fresh tribute to the fav'rite bow'r—
Yet instant at his entrance in the grot,
Seiz'd by strange awe he fain would fly the spot,
Drawn back by viewless arm, and force of magick pow'r.

XIII.

Surpris'd he casts his basket on the ground:
Yet soon recovering laughs at idle fear;
Then with firm footstep draws the grotto near.
The doubtful glimmers that his eye confound,
And thousand twinkling spots of changeful light,
That in the grove with solid darkness fight,
Suddenly struck his soul with vain alarm:
'Tis past: he hastes, the basket on his arm,
Where day's expanding beams steal gradual on his sight.

XIV.

Here form'd for artful love's sequester'd scene,
On stolen joys a magick daylight beams:
Nor day, nor twilight—yet more lovely gleams
The soften'd tint that floated both between:
Mild as the light that through the rosy bower
Glides from the moon at midnight's cloudless hour,
Melting her silver orb in paly red:
Yet here, where no suspicion wakes a dread,
He thrills in strange suspense as tranc'd by magick pow'r.

XV.

And nothing can the doubtful knight persuade
That art's superfluous care must deck the bow'r,
Where nature pour'd profuse each varied flow'r—
And, while his eye in pleasing wonder stray'd
Around, unweetingly from side to side,
How paint his feelings, when the youth descry'd,
Where in the bow'r, beneath th' enchanting light,
A Houri form, reposing, met his sight,
And loveliest charms display'd in beauty's dazzling pride.

XVI.

Her veil of gauze, loose floating, like a shade
That on an alabaster image plays,
Waves here and there before his ravish'd gaze,
And seems to add, by highest art array'd,
To each seductive charm a modest grace.
Oh! cease, presumptuous Muse! nor dare to trace,
Charms where a Titian's trembling pencil falls!
The knight enchanted views—each look enthralls!—
Oh! close th' insatiate eye!—Oh! fly the baneful place!

XVII.

Sweetly deluded by her winning air,
He thinks, (one moment scarce the thought endures)
So wondrous fair the form that sense allures,
'Tis Rezia's self—what other form so fair?
But, doubtful of his bliss, with wild alarms
He nearer glides—he sees a stranger's charms!
Almansaris!—he turns, he flies the place—
Yet flying, feels at once her warm embrace—
Feels round his body wreath'd her fond encircling arms.

XVIII.

E'en in those arms heroick Huon fights
Pure virtue's hardest strife—the war of truth,
Unshaken constancy, and fiery youth,
With beauty, grace, and wanton warm delights.
Pure in intention—there no blame can rest:
His cheek no blush of willing guilt confest—
But will he long withstand her touching pray'r?
How shall frail youth resist the matchless fair,
Whose tender wild embrace close chains him to her breast?

XIX.

Where is thy lily wand, O fairy king!
Thy horn, to rescue from seductive death?
He calls Amanda with empassion'd breath—
Saints! angels! Oberon! protection bring!
To virtue's call kind Heaven in pity bent.
Yet ere he feels each lab'ring sinew spent,
Yet ere he feels her all-subduing charms,
And the warm magick of her glowing arms,
Sudden Almansor comes by fate propitious sent.

XX.

Like a wild beast, the arrow in the wound,
Rack'd by the pang of unsuccessful love,
With restless step, uncertain where to rove,
The king had pac'd the garden round and round.
Mere chance conducts him to the myrtle shade:
He thinks he hears, as passing by the glade,
The fair sultana's voice within the wood:
And, as the grotto's gate half open stood,
He enters unoppos'd—what now the dame shall aid?

XXI.

The watchful fiend, who arms against the knight
The subtlest beauty that e'er lur'd to love,
Bodes by the footstep echoing in the grove,
That soon the king will rush upon their sight.—
"Help me! oh! help!" her thrilling shrieks exclaim:
At once her part is chang'd—the artful dame
Seems, wild with rage, her honour to defend,
With Huon's struggling arms her arms contend:
She combats force with force, nor yields to guilty shame.

XXII.

Her wild strange look, her rent disorder'd veil,
Her streaming hair—the youth who silent stood
Guilt-charg'd, within the interdicted wood,
And, as if pierc'd with lightning, deadly pale,
While from her lips unanswer'd falsehoods flow:
All fatally conspire with specious show,
To mark his guilt, and aid th' insidious fair—
"Alla be prais'd!" she cries with pious air,
"'Tis to Almansor's self that more than life I owe!"

XXIII.

And when the wanton in her fluttering veil
Had swiftly rapt her charms, with mien and tone,
Suited to truth and innocence alone,
She feigns with lying lip a specious tale:
Feigns that this hidden shameless Christian son,
What time at early dawn, all eyes to shun,
She came to bathe in this sequester'd place,
Had dar'd to clasp her in his bold embrace:
How she had fought—and fail'd—ah! but for him
undone!

XXIV.

From vile reproach to free the virtuous youth,
Thus shamefully by lying lip accus'd,
Ask'd but one look, impartial, unabus'd:
Rage that inflam'd his judge, obscur'd the truth.
The hero scorns to clear his spotless fame,
Nor will redeem his life by female shame.
Calmly he yields his arms to galling chains;
And mute an awful dignity maintains,
Wrapt in internal worth, and conscience void of blame.

XXV.

The king, whom hopeless love revengeful made,
Sullen and unconcern'd beholds the knight—
"Drag him away in fetters from my sight!
"Seize him! ye slaves!"—the slaves his word obey'd.
"This night in bitterness of anguish past,
"Deep in the gloomiest vault the traitour cast!
"And when the iman summons from the tower,
"At morn let raging flames the wretch devour!
"Then with dire curses strew his ashes to the blast!"

XXVI.

Huon in silence hears him undismay'd,
And darting at the dame a glance of fire,
Hastes from her sight, impatient to retire,
With look where conscious innocence portray'd
A soul that knew no guilt, no torture fear'd.
No light the melancholy dungeon cheer'd:
Weigh'd down in heavy chains he waits his doom,
His spirit droops beneath the death-like gloom,
Where not a transient gleam of distant hope appear'd.

XXVII.

The wretch o'erpower'd with fate's incessant blows,
No hope to sooth th' inexorable doom,
Bids pitying death unclose th' oblivious tomb,
And lay at last his spirit to repose.
Does feeble nature dread the tort'ring fire?
Unconquer'd love can fearless strength inspire,
And bid the soul on wing celestial soar—
"Faith and unshaken love till death I swore:
"True, to Amanda true, her Huon shall expire.

XXVIII.

"O thou belov'd! O might my doom of death
" Remain from thee eternally conceal'd!
" To thee, my trusty liegeman! unreveal'd:
" Oh that unwept might flow my parting breath!
" Then would I joyful meet the raging flame.
" But if ye hear what hostile tongues proclaim,
" Crimes that my soul abhorr'd—if rumour'd guilt
" Embitter tears by tender pity spilt,
" Oh! if ye grieve that death has clos'd a life of shame!

XXIX.

" Spare me! stern god! distress too great to bear.
" Fierce king of terrours! haste! let pangs unknown
" For every guilty deed at last atone!
" I bow, nor weary Heaven with fruitless prayer.
" But to the friend thou lov'd'st one favour deign,
" Protect me, Oberon! from disgraceful stain!
" Protect Amanda—all to thee is known:
" Say that I brav'd stern death for her alone,
" And to confirm my vow hell's fiery proof sustain."

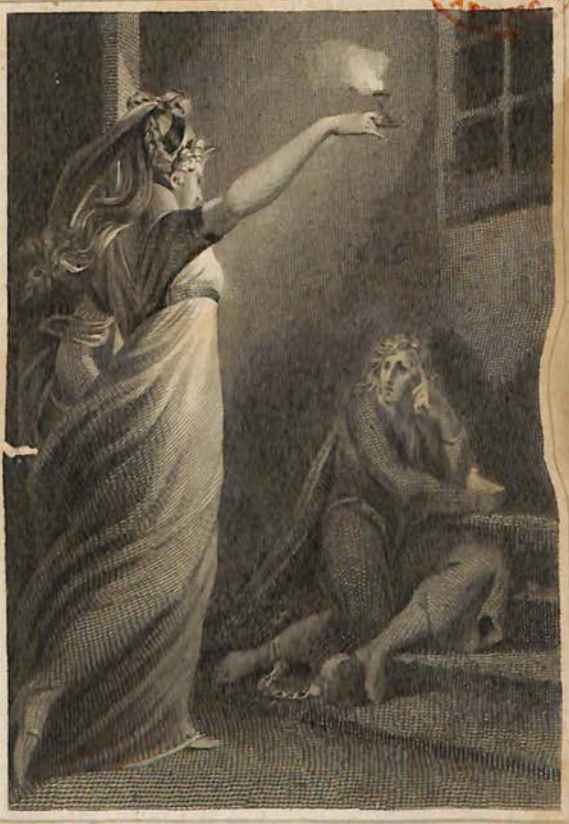
XXX.

Thus he exclaims, reposing on the thought
That Oberon will at least his death-sigh hear.
When softly sliding from the nightly sphere,
His dewy wreath with nodding poppies wrought,
The soother of all sorrow deigns descend,
And o'er his flinty couch in pity bend:
Perchance the elfine king, in pledge of peace,
Pledge that each torturing pang shall swiftly cease,
Shook from his viewless wing the dream that sooth'd his friend.

XXXI.

When half the world lay wrapt in sleepless night,
A jarring sound the startled hero wakes:
With grating keys the dungeon hoarsely shakes,
The iron door expands: a paly light
Gleams through the vaults, at distance dim descried:
He hears a step draw near—in beauty's pride
A female comes—wide floats her glistening gown,
Her hand sustains a lamp, her head a crown:
Lo! the sultana's self stands graceful at his side!

ROYAL B. WAY BRANCH
V.C. page 198



H. Pacelli R.A. pinx.t

J. Heath sculp.t

Published March 1st 1806 by Cadell & Davies Strand.

XXXII.

The smiling queen her beauteous hand extends—
" Wilt thou forgive that counterfeited part,
" When dire necessity belied my heart?
" O thou belov'd! my life on thine depends!
" Oh! let this act that transient ill atone!
" Spite of thy struggles here I come alone,
" From death to snatch thee, from that flaming pyre,
" Where the stern tyrant dooms thee to expire,
" And raise thee to the height thou well deserv'st—a throne.

XXXIII.

" Arise! for thee the sunny paths expand
" Of empire—love conducts thee—wake to fame!
" Let glory to the world thy deeds proclaim.
" Go, where love guides thee by this proffer'd hand.
" The ruthless tyrant dies! his guards retreat!
" His slaves, like dust, shall fall before thy feet—
" The harem to my nod obedience yields:
" Love opes thy prison, love thy bosom shields:
" Go forth! what love has dar'd, heroick youth! complete."

XXXIV.

'Desist, O queen! the plan thou deign'st propose,
'Barbs with new pangs the shaft of tort'ring pain.
'Ah! why against my will my soul constrain
'To scorn each gift that from thy bounty flows?
'No deed of guilt shall these vile fetters loose!'—
"Can folly thus," she cried, "thy soul abuse?
"Wretch! while destruction tow'rs before thy sight,
"And on yon pile death waves thy funeral light,
"Canst thou my proffer'd hand, and throne at once
refuse?"

XXXV.

'Tell me,' the hero answers, 'tell me, queen!
'If I can aid thee by my flowing blood,
'I at thy feet will pour the vital flood:
'And, mark! beyond vain words, in action seen,
'That no ungrateful wretch before thee lies—
'My life is thine—accept the sacrifice—
'From honour, faith, I never can depart:
'Thou know'st me not—forget not who thou art!
'Nor ask, oh vain request! what fate itself denies!'

XXXVI.

But more inflam'd, the more exalted truth
And virtue strengthen his heroick heart,
The wily wanton tries each subtile art,
To bend the spirit of th' unconquer'd youth.
Now lures, now threatens, falls his feet before:
What rage and love suggest, tries o'er and o'er,
In madd'ning passion lost—yet nothing gains.
His stedfast soul immoveable remains,
True to the vow that love to chaste Amanda swore.

XXXVII.

"Die! since thou wilt," she cries with breathless ire,
"I, I will stand in triumph o'er thy pile,
"And on thy death-pang feast my scornful smile!
"Victim of sullen pride! dull fool! expire!"
She speaks, and curses loud the luckless hour
When first she felt his fascinating pow'r.
Wild foams her lip, her eyes like lightning glare,
She flies away in merciless despair,
And stern behind her locks the hoarse-resounding tow'r.

XXXVIII.

Meanwhile report, whose murmurs never fail
To gain fresh vigour as they circle round,
Swelling from ear to ear the echoed sound,
To Sherasmin and Fatma brought the tale—
The beauteous Hassan, all alike proclaim,
Was seiz'd, sad wretch! devoid of grace and shame!
Was by the sultan seiz'd upon the spot,
With fair Almansaris within the grot,
And will to-morrow feast the guilt-avenging flame.

XXXIX.

If free from guilt their much-lov'd master dies,
They scorn to ask—to them the truth was known—
Yet, had he sinn'd, their hearts had pity shown:
Faith glories in the test when misery tries.
They shed not fruitless tears in vain lament;
Pledg'd to endure the unforeseen event,
Both vow to free him from the gaping tomb,
Or, if the effort fail, to share his doom:
Both, with their much lov'd lord, at once to die content.

XL.

In short, ere morning's fatal light arose,
The plan succeeds that Fatma's courage weaves:
Her cautious vigilance the guard deceives.
She slides where Rezia rock'd to soft repose,
Trance'd in fond dreams of Huon sweetly sleeps.
Joy, that in tears of thrilling rapture steeps
The long-lost friends, awhile their speech suppress—
"He lives!" bursts forth from Fatma's struggling breast,
"The hero lives!" she cries, then hangs her head and weeps.

XLI.

'What say'st thou?' wild with joy Amanda cries,
And falls upon her neck—'my Huon near!
'Where is he?—Fatma, speak!'—"'Tis death to hear!"
With interrupting sobs the nurse replies—
"Help thy lov'd lord!—rend, rend his bonds in twain!
"Burst ope his prison, haste! or help is vain—
"For thee he falls!—Death hovers o'er the youth!"—
Then she relates how firm his fearless truth,
And what mad rage inflames the fair sultana's brain.

XLII.

" Already tow'rs on high the fatal pyre:
" No power on earth can rescue from the grave,
" If Zoradine should fail the wretch to save."—
The pangs of death Amanda's shriek inspire:
Rous'd in wild haste she rushes from her bed,
Casts o'er her limbs a night-gown loosely spread,
Bound by a girdle to her throbbing breast;
Bursts through the slaves that guard the sultan's rest,
And to Almansor's couch is swift as lightning sped.

XLIII.

Wing'd with wild haste her Huon's life to save,
Low at the sultan's feet Amanda bends;
Down her pale cheek the gushing tear descends,
And floating ringlets o'er her bosom wave.
" Oh! let me not, Almansor! beg in vain!
" And, bow'd before thee, fruitlessly complain!
" If yet this wretched life deserve thy care,
" Swear thou will grant my first, my only pray'r!
" My peace depends on thee—do thou these tears
restrain!"

XLIV.

Pleas'd and surpris'd, he cries, 'O maid divine!
'Name but thy wish, and instantly receive!
'Oh! speak! nor let a doubt thy bosom grieve!
'I live to please thee—all I have is thine—
'Lo! at thy feet my realm, my wealth, my throne:
'But one sole treasure Mansor calls his own,
'Let me thy charms, celestial maid! secure—
"Swear it."—'By Alla!' swears the love-tranc'd Moor,
"Then grant me Hassan's life! but that, and that alone!"

XLV.

'What!' as with troubled mien he backward bends,
What have thy lips, rash fair! unweeting said?
'Ah! what to thee that slave's detested head?'—
"Almansor! on his life, my life depends!"—
'On him! thou idly rav'st!' the king replies:
'Wake from this fev'rous dream—the wretch despise—
'Abuse not thus the right that beauty gave:
'Love's boundless right—ah! what to thee a slave,
'Who suffers for his crime?'—"For truth alone he die-

XLVI.

" He dies unsullied by disgraceful deeds;
" True to his faith, he stood the dangerous test:
" Yet, were he base, oh spare this guiltless breast
" That in his pangs with equal misery bleeds!"—
While kindling anger sparkles in his eyes,
' Relentless Zoradine!' the sultan cries,
' Why torture thus my soul with dread delay?
' What hidden secret glimmers into day?
' Ah! what to thee that slave? unfold without disguise!'

XLVII.

" Since thus compell'd, my voice proclaims the truth,
" Lo! here his wife! Indissoluble bands,
" Not form'd on earth, the web of heavenly hands,
" Bind me for ever to this much-lov'd youth—
" Sultan! we bend beneath the load of fate,
" That galls us, day by day, with added weight:
" Blest as thou art, thou soon may'st feel the blow—
" Oh! witness of these tears! respect my wo,
" Thou happy one! relent!—oh! save, ere yet too late!"

XLVIII.

'Thou Hassan's wife? and lov'st him!'—"Above all!"
'Scorn the base wretch! the traitour is untrue.'—
"Not so!—the death he meets with fearless view
"Springs from his truth, 'tis faith compels his fall!"—
'These eyes beheld his guilt!'—"A wily snake
"Deceiv'd him and thyself—From errour wake!"
With countenance on fire Almansor cries,
'Too conscious of thy charms, yet, yet be wise!
'Proud dame! the bow o'erstrain'd, at last will surely break!

XLIX.

'He dies! his fate is fixt—I share thy grief.'—
"Dies!" Rezia shrieks, "this tyrant! to his wife!
"When but a word from thee redeems his life?
"And still thy ruthless soul denies relief!"
'He spurn'd the harem's law. The guilty slave
'Must die—stern justice hurls him to the grave.
'Yet, since thou wilt, the lot of life and death
'Waits on thy word—fate hangs upon thy breath:
'Thy voice shall fix his doom, destroy the wretch,

or save

L.

' Oh let my soul from thine th' example trace,
' Sooth with complying smile my wounded peace,
' The sufferings thou hast caus'd, oh! bid them cease!
' And deign my crown upon thy temples place.
' Oh! be but mine! the traitour's guilt, though great,
' Is pardon'd—royal gifts on Hassan wait:
' So let him to his race in peace retire—
' The mercy thou demand'st, do thou inspire:
' One word decrees at once both mine and Hassan's fate!'

LI.

Scorn and indignant rage her bosom burn—
" The man I love avoids not death by shame;
" The man I love prefers not life to fame.
" Tyrant! my basest slave would proudly spurn
" Thee and thy throne at price of infamy:
" My basest slave thy baffled rage defy:
" With tort'ring pangs, my blood, barbarian! spill;
" Yet vain thy threats, I bow not to thy will!
" Barbarian! vain thy rage—I also know to die."

LII.

The strength of her exalted spirit awes
His coward heart—her threats the tyrant move,
More than her pray'rs; but most the rage of love:
Beauty the wretch in base subjection draws—
Vain every art to bribe her steady mind!
How did he pray, how serpentinely wind
With mean submission prostrate at her feet!
What vows, what offers, threats and pray'rs repeat!
Threats, offers, pray'rs, she scorns, to welcome death resign'd.

LIII.

She death prefers—and turns in scorn away—
The sultan swears aloud by Mahom's grave,
No pow'r on earth her forfeit life shall save,
If yet her haughty soul his will delay!—
'Yes—thou shalt yield, or may I here expire!
'May Alla plunge me in eternal fire!'
The guards at distance hear the maniack cry,
'Resolve, this instant! at a word comply!
'Or, with the wretch accurs'd, ascend the funeral pyre!

LIV.

Silent she eyes him with indignant mien—
'Resolve!' again his frantick voice exclaims:—
"But free me from thy sight! surrounding flames,
"And death, terrifick death! less hateful seen.
Almansor, madd'ning with revengeful ire,
Thunders the word that dooms her to expire,
While in his flaming eye hell fiercely glows:
Down to the dust the negro ruler bows,
And swears with slavish fear, "'Tis done! his lord's desire."

LV.

Already pil'd the dreadful shrine appears,
Rear'd for the fatal offering—Throng on throng,
Already anxious thousands flock along,
To steep in pity's sympathizing tears
The eye that lingers willingly delay'd,
Where deeds of painful horrour rise display'd.
Already stand before the martyr-stake
The pair that perish for each other's sake,
The pair, sole faithful found, by tortures undismay'd.

LVI.

Twin souls from mutual love that melt in one,
And true and faithful to their vow remain,
And rather death mid tort'ring pangs sustain,
Than mount by base inconstancy a throne.
The crowd, with piteous look and tortur'd heart,
Take in their fate a sympathetic part:
Yet fearful, lest some hazard intervene,
To check the tears that sooth the tragick scene,
And warm from pity's fount, at sight of misery start.

LVII.

Alas! the wretched solace is denied,
As bound in torturing cords the lovers lie,
Turn'd face to face to mix the farewell sigh.
Yet heav'nly bliss the present pang defy'd,
And proudly triumph'd o'er the dread unknown:
How blest to die for love and faith alone!
Death, that assails them in their youthful bloom,
With love's eternal laurel shades their tomb.
Death is their mutual choice—their mutual scorn a throne.

LVIII.

Twelve negroes, pair by pair, in dread array,
Wave high their torches tipt with blazing fire,
And stand in act to light the funeral pyre.
The aga nods—the slaves his nod obey—
Loud from the welkin sudden thunders ring:
Earth totters, lightnings flash with fiery wing:
Quench'd are the tort'ring flames—like singed hair
The cords consume that bound th' heroick pair,
And lo! round Huon's neck the horn is seen to swing.

LIX.

And at the instant, mid th' eventful scene,
Almansor and Almansaris appear,
With echoing outcry loud, and mad career:
To shield her Hassan flies th' impatient queen;
To Zoradine, Almansor.—Swift advance
Their separate troops with dagger and with lance:
And there a dauntless knight, like death to view,
With naked falchion mid th' affrighted crew,
In sable armour mail'd, darts with indignant glance.

LX.

No sooner had the grateful knight beheld,
With joyful ardour seen, the ivory horn,
Sweet pledge of fairy grace, his neck adorn,
Than with melodious whisper gently swell'd,
His lip entices forth the sweetest tone
That ever breath'd through magick ivory blown:
He scorns to doom a coward race to death.
"Dance! till ye weary gasp, depriv'd of breath—
'Huon permits himself this slight revenge alone."

LXI.

As sounds the horn, a fascinating trance
Seizes the mob that round the scaffold prest;
Half-naked, swarthy, ragged rogues at best,
They spin like madmen in the whirling dance.
Now with his negro set the aga raves,
Wide and more wide the giddy circle waves:
Whoe'er has foot to caper in the sport,
Frisks it away, in city, harem, court,
E'en from the sultan's self to water-bearing slaves.

LXII.

The sheik unwilling seizes by the arm
The harem queen—their struggles nought avail;
Alike his scorn, and her reluctance fail:
Tranc'd by the magick horn's provoking charm,
The royal pair fantastick capers wage—
In short, all Tunis maddens to engage:
None can remain unshaken on their seat.
Gout, dropsy, asthma, bound with equal heat,
Nor death's convulsive pang escapes the merry rage.

LXIII.

Meanwhile regardless of this puppet play,
The faithful pair by mutual virtue grac'd,
Tranc'd with pure bliss each other long embrac'd:
Can speech their boundless extasy convey:
Their souls to heavenly bliss sublimely soar:
The mournful dream out-dreamt, the trial o'er,
Nought but its memory left to grace their love:
Their guilt aton'd, consenting heavens approve,
And reunite the pair that fate shall part no more.

LXIV.

Blest in their mutual bliss, upon his steed
The trusty Sherasmin (the sable knight)
Melts while their souls dissolve in pure delight.
'Twas Sherasmin who flew with lightning speed,
At hazard of his life, their lives to save,
He singly dar'd the coward million brave.
And if his arm had fail'd beneath the strife,
He at their feet had rendered up his life,
Resolv'd their doom to change, or find a willing grave.

LXV.

Downward he springs, and with exalted air,
Amid the dance, with Fatma thither flown,
Hastens to help the lovers from their throne,
And with triumphant pride receive the pair.
With heart-felt joy the friends long-sever'd meet;
But higher still their throbbing pulses beat,
When through the air the swan-wing'd chariot flew,
And as they gaz'd still near and nearer drew,
Then lightly touch'd the ground, descending at their feet.

LXVI.

They mount the car—the Moors may ceaseless prance
Long as such fancies please the fairy king:
Though Sherasmin, who views the giddy ring,
Think that to delve the dike, not weave the dance,
Were better pastime for that roguish crew.
Th' aërial steeds their noiseless course pursue;
Nimble as thought itself, and soft as sleep,
O'er land and sea their pinions smoothly sweep,
While zephyrs fan the clouds that round the chariot flew.

LXVII.

Already they behold where twilight sweeps
Her veil of shapeless mist o'er mount and hill:
And see the moon admire her image still
In many a lake that calm beneath her sleeps.
Night far and wide her silent shadow flings,
As earthward gradual with descending wings
The self-reign'd swans their course celestial leave:
When, as if woven from the rosy eve,
Radiant before their sight a floating palace springs!

LXVIII.

Girt with a pleasant grove, sweet shades between
Where arching rose-trees meet in wavy play,
Appear'd the palace whose alluring ray
Bright through the wood's o'ershadowing foliage seen,
Diffus'd around its wide resplendent light.—
"This, was not this the place?" soft-breath'd the knight:
Yet, ere he forms the sound, a golden gate
At once expands, and lo! in graceful state,
Twice ten fair virgins float before their ravish'd sight.

LXIX.

With ever-blooming cheeks the virgins move,
Beauteous as May, and deck'd in robes of snow;
And hail, triumphant from the world of wo,
The pair whom Oberon greets with boundless love.
To graceful measures glides the choral throng,
And truth's immortal guerdon swells the song—
"Come, faithful pair!" (while golden cymbals ring,
Light as they weave the dance, and sweetly sing)
"Blest pair! receive this wreath! to you these flowers
belong."

LXX.

The lovers, scarce themselves, in blissful trance
Rapt in another world, float hand in hand,
Where rang'd on either side the virgins stand:
There, as a sun, before their dazzled glance,
And like a bridegroom rob'd in radiant sheen,
The fairy monarch stood with graceful mien.
No more in sweet disguise, a lovely child;
On youth's full bloom eternal beauty smil'd,
And sparkling on his hand th' enchanted ring is seen.

LXXI.

Titania, by his side, with roses wreath'd,
Gleams like a bride in moonlight's modest ray;
Their wedded hands a myrtle crown display:—
"Take," with sweet tone their souls harmonious breath'd,
"Thou faithful pair! for you alone decreed,
"This well-earn'd chaplet, victory's heav'nly meed!
"Receive from friendly hands the gift divine!
"And long as ye retain this favour'd sign,
"So never from your hearts shall happiness recede!"

LXXII.

Scarce had the fairy king the word exprest,
Than from the air a cloud is seen to bend:
Three elfine sisters from its lap descend,
Each with a lily waving o'er her breast:
Soft to the play of golden harps they glide:
With these a child of wondrous grace descry'd;
The kneeling nymphs present him to their queen:
Titania o'er him bows her smiling mien,
Then with a kiss restores to Huon's breathless bride.

LXXIII.

And mid the songs of that angelic band
That rang'd before them glide in graceful row,
And, as they step, their path with roses strow,
They float where Oberon's golden gates expand,
And reach the throne where joys eternal dwell.
But what they saw and heard, no tongue can tell:
Yet what the lip, entranc'd in bliss, supprest,
Spoke in their grateful look to heaven addrest,
Spoke in their lifted eye, whence tears of rapture fell.

LXXIV.

Soft in a sleep enchanting died away
The holy dream—and arm in arm, at morn,
Upon a bank of moss, as newly born,
They found themselves, fresh rising with the ray:
In rich caparison and stately pride,
Four milk-white steeds stood prancing by their side:
And there in heaps upon the bushes round,
Stores of bright armour, and rich robes were found:
Armour for princely knight, and robes for royal bride.

LXXV.

The knight, whose heart with boundless rapture leaps,
Rouses from deep repose his trusty squire:
Amanda's eye with look of fond desire
Hangs o'er her smiling babe, who softly sleeps
In Fatma's lap—entranc'd they gaze around—
The wondrous scenes their doubtful sense confound—
"Where," cries his ravish'd liegeman, "in what land,
"Where are we?—lo! what well-known scenes expand!
"Look to the west, and say, in what delightful ground?"

LXXVI.

Scarce can Sir Huon trust his wond'ring gaze—
He who had much experienc'd, he whose eyes
Had look'd on miracles without surprise,
Beholds the real scene with strange amaze—
Whe winding streams of Seine before him roll!
The towers of Paris fascinate his soul!—
He looks again, he doubts, he rubs his brow,
Looks ever back with quick impatient glow—
"Does then no dream deceive?—already reach'd the goal?"

LXXVII.

And as he views, o'ercome with sweet delight,
Lo! a new scene of warlike pomp expands!
The castle rings around with glitt'ring bands:
The trumpet summons—and before his sight,
Mail'd for the tournament, in bright attire,
Prance to the barriers many a knight and squire—
"My happiness," cries Huon, "hope exceeds!
"If no false dream my cheated eye-sight feeds,
"The tourney now invites!—haste! Sherasmin, enquire."

LXXVIII.

The old man hastes, the while with sumptuous art
Proud Fatma decks Amanda's angel grace;
For all that in this far and foreign place
Suited her rank, or could a charm impart
To native loveliness, in rich array,
Jewels and robes in heaps before them lay.—
Sir Huon, while his soul dissolves in bliss,
Prints on his smiling boy the frequent kiss,
And rocks him on his knee in fond parental play.

LXXIX.

And now he sees with ever new desire
His lovely bride in splendid robes array'd,
Vainly adorn'd by art's superfluous aid:
Alike she charms in plain or rich attire—
If but a rose o'ershade her snowy breast,
If by the hand of pride, in jewels drest,
Resplendent diamonds o'er her bosom flame,
Love-breathing native beauty still the same,
In gem or simple flow'r, unrival'd grace possest.

LXXX.

Now Sherasmin returning brings the news—
" Three days the barriers, Sir, have open stood:
" Charles still tormented by his ranc'rous mood,
" With rage implacable thy shade pursues.
" Three days has fame the solemn lists proclaim'd:
" Guess what the prize of glorious victory nam'd?
" No less than Huon's honours and estate!—
" To see thy triumph o'er opposing fate,
" Such thought has ne'er in dreams the raging king
" inflam'd."

LXXXI.

' Arm, arm me!' wild with joy, Sir Huon cries,
' Most grateful news! Now Huon lives again!
' What birth once gave, now valour shall obtain:
' Ah! if this hand shall fail to win the prize,
' So may the emperour at his will assign,
' To one more worthy, lands that once were mine!'—
Amanda beams on him inspiring charms,
Her heart beats conquest, as adorn'd in arms
Radiant before her sight comes forth the man divine.

LXXXII.

On stately steeds, Sir Huon and the fair,
Slow through the city pace in proud career:
Charm'd by their state, wherever they appear,
All eyes are fix't upon the lovely pair.
The gazing throng that fills the echoing street,
Crowds to their course; gay shouts their presence greet.
Now at the lists the knight, his breast on flame,
To Heaven and Sherasmin commends the dame,
And draws his vizor down, and hastes the foe to meet.

LXXXIII.

Loud acclamations ring from side to side—
Soon as he enter'd on th' appointed place,
His warlike port, and high heroick grace,
Outshone the bravest that had dar'd abide
The dreadful fray, in dignity and pow'r,
Dark on his steed the knight was seen to low'r,
Who day by day with all-subduing force
Had lightly won the honour of the course:
Charles with his barons girt stood gazing from the tow'r.

LXXXIV.

The knight, as knight became of princely breed,
Before the emperour bends with courtly bow,
Salutes the dames, and judges in a row,
And paces round and round his fiery steed:
Then bids the heralds to the knight proclaim
A rival who contends the prize of fame—
He should have first announc'd his name and rank,
But as he swore he was by birth a Frank,
His oath, and princely pomp, absolve th' accustom'd claim.

LXXXV.

Poising, he chooses from a heap of spears
One that on trial seem'd of heaviest weight,
And waving it aloft with graceful state,
Bold at his place in manly pride appears:
Amanda's throbbing breast strange fear reveals,
While many a fervent prayer in secret steals
Wing'd to the heav'nly saints and guardian spright,
When, from the barriers loos'd, each rival knight
Spurs his impatient steed, as loud the trumpet peals.

LXXXVI.

How swell'd the rage of that indignant knight,
Who prone on earth had cast with conqu'ring lance
All who had dar'd within the lists advance!
How swell'd his boundless rage, in doubtful fight
Again to hazard his heroick fame!
Of Doolin of Mayence the heir he came:
Jousts were to him like huntings of the hare:
He raves, and like a bolt that fires the air,
Against Sir Huon storms with death-directed aim.

LXXXVII.

But Huon, fixt unshaken in his seat,
Confronts th' assailant in his middle course,
And striking on the breast with matchless force,
Prone hurls him sideway prostrate at his feet.
Bruis'd, scarce alive, regardless of disgrace,
His rival risks no more a second race:
Four pages from the lists the warriour bear;
Loud peals of victory rend the shouting air,
And Huon stands alone victorious on the place.

LXXXVIII.

Awhile he stands in triumph at the goal,
Lest some advent'rous knight should haply bend,
And dare once more the tempting prize contend:
But none advance—how throbs our hero's soul!
He greets Amanda with impatient speed,
And guides the goddess on her stately steed.
Now at the court arriv'd with graceful air,
The warriour from the palfry lifts the fair,
And leads where shouting throngs their joyful path
precede.

LXXXIX.

Up the high marble steps he leads the queen:
A veil light-hov'ring like a silver cloud,
Conceals her lovely features from the crowd—
No eye can pierce the dazzling maze between.
By keen impatience fir'd, to know how fate
Will close the scene, surrounding thousands wait.
A spacious hall expands—in council shown,
High peers, and barons bold, surround a throne
Where Charlemagne appears in proud imperial state.

XC.

Our hero lifts the helmet from his head;
And boldly ent'ring, like the god of day,
His golden ringlets down his armour play—
All, wond'ring, greet the youth long-mourn'd as dead.
Before the king his spirit seems to stand!
Sir Huon with Amanda, hand in hand,
Salutes the emperour with respectful bow—
" Behold! obedient to his plighted vow,
" Thy vassal, sovereign liege! returning to thy land.

XCI.

" For by the help of Heaven this arm has done
" What thou enjoin'dst—and lo! before thine eye
" The beard and teeth of Asia's monarch lie,
" At hazard of my life, to please thee, won;
" And in this fair, by every peril tried,
" The heiress of his throne, my love, my bride!"—
He spoke: and lo! at once her knight to grace,
Off falls the veil that hid Amanda's face,
And a new radiance gilds the hall from side to side.

XCII.

An angel seems array'd in heavenly light,
(Yet milder than the forms that grace the sky,
Mild, so that man might gaze, nor gazing die,)
To stand confest before their wond'ring sight—
So stately, yet so lovely to behold,
Crown'd with her myrtle wreath, and silver fold,
Amanda shines—Titania deigns descend,
And joins unseen the triumph of her friend:
While every heart bows down at once by love control'd.

XCIII.

Charles from his throne descends, with noble grace
Bids welcome to the court the beauteous bride:
The peers that press around on every side,
The youthful hero in their arms embrace—
The youthful hero, from such perils freed,
Who home return'd, achiev'd th' advent'rous deed—
The emperour clasps him with paternal hand—
" And ne'er," he cries, " be wanting to our land
" A prince like thee, to win high virtue's heavenly meed."

THE END.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016